

22 GITA

1. The greatness of little things, that is what the Gita teaches, bless the old book!
2. This is the one central idea in the Gita: Work incessantly, but be not attached to it.
3. The Bhagavad-Gita is the best commentary we have on the Vedanta philosophy- curiously enough the scene is laid on the battlefield, where Krishna teaches this philosophy to Arjuna, and the doctrine which stands out luminously in every page of the Gita is intense activity, but in the midst of it, eternal calmness. This is the secret of work, to attain which is the goal of the Vedanta.
4. We are reading the Gita by candle-light, but numbers of insects are being burnt to death. Thus it is seen that some evil clings to work. Those who work without any consciousness of their lower ego are not affected with evil, for they work for the good of the world. To work without motive, to work unattached, brings the highest bliss and freedom. This secret of Karma- Yoga is taught by the Lord Sri Krishna in the Gita.
5. In reading the Bhagavad-Gita many of you in Western countries may have felt astonished in the second chapter, wherein Sri Krishna calls Arjuna a hypocrite and a coward because of his refusal to fight, or offer resistance, on account of his adversaries being his friends and relatives, making the plea that non-resistance was the highest ideal of love. This is a great lesson for us all to learn, that in all matters the two extremes are alike; the extreme positive and the extreme negative are always similar. . . . Arjuna became a coward at the sight of the mighty array against him; his "love" made him forget his duty towards his country and king. This is why Sri Krishna told him that he was a hypocrite: Thou talkest like a wise man, but thy actions betray thee to be a coward; therefore stand up and fight!
6. We read in the Bhagavad-Gita again and again that we must all work incessantly. All work is by nature composed of good and evil. We cannot do any work which will not do some good somewhere; there cannot be any work which will not cause some harm somewhere. Every work must necessarily be a mixture of good and evil; yet we are commanded to work incessantly. Good and evil will both have their results, will produce their Karma. Good action will entail upon us good effect; bad action, bad. But good and bad are both bondages of the soul. The solution reached in the Gita in regard to this bondage-producing nature of work is that if we do not attach ourselves to the work we do, it will not have any binding effect on our soul.
7. This is the one cause of misery: we are attached; we are being caught. Therefore says the Gita: Work instantly; work, but be not attached; be not caught. Reserve unto yourself the power of detaching yourself from everything, however beloved, however much the soul might yearn for it, however great the pangs of misery you feel if you are going to leave it; still, reserve the power of leaving it whenever you want.
8. The heart's love is due to only One. To whom? To Him who never changeth. . . . So

says Sri Krishna in the Gita: The Lord is the only one who never changes. His love never fails. Wherever we are and whatever we do. He is ever and ever the same merciful, the same loving heart. He never changes. . . , We must love Him, and everyone that lives-only in and through Him. This is the keynote.

9. Gita teaches Karma-Yoga, we should work through Yoga concentration. In such concentration in action Karma-Yoga, there is no consciousness of the lower ego present. The consciousness that I am doing this and that is never present when one works through Yoga. The Western people do not understand this. They say that if there be no consciousness of ego, if this ego is gone, how then can a man work? But when one works with concentration, losing all consciousness of oneself, the work that is done will be infinitely better, and this every one may have experienced in his own life... The Gita teaches that all works should be done thus. He who is one with the Lord through Yoga performs all his works by becoming immersed in concentration, and does not seek any personal benefit. Such a performance of work brings only good to the world, no evil can come out of it. Those who work thus never do anything for themselves.

10. Aye, if there is anything in the Gita that I like, it is the two verses, coming out strong as the very gist, the very essence, of Krishna's teaching: ^He who sees the Supreme Lord dwelling alike in all beings, the Imperishable in things that perish, he sees indeed. For seeing the Lord as the same, everywhere present, he does not destroy the Self by the self, and thus he goes to the highest goal."

11. The Bhagavad-Gita is the best authority on Vedanta.

12. Wherein lies the originality of the Gita, which distinguishes it from all preceding Scriptures? It is this: Though before its advent. Yoga, Jnana, Bhakti, etc. had each its strong adherents, they all quarrelled among themselves, each claiming superiority for his own chosen path, no one ever tried to seek for reconciliation among these different paths. It was the author of the Gita who for the first time tried to harmonise these. He took the best from what all the sects then existing had to offer, and threaded them in the Gita.

13. The reconciliation of the different paths of Dharma, and work without desire or attachment- these are the two special characteristics of the Gita.

14. If one reads this one Sloka-Yield not to unmanliness, son of Pritha, ill doth it become thee. Cast off this mean faint-heartedness and arise, scorcher of thy enemies - he gets all the merits of reading the entire Gita; for in this one Sloka lies imbedded the whole message of the Gita.

15. Many are of opinion that the Gita was not written at the time of the Mahabharata, but was subsequently added to it. This is not correct. The special teachings of the Gita are to be found in every part of the Mahabharata; and if the Gita is to be expunged, as forming no part of it, every other portion of it which embodies the same teachings should be similarly treated.

16. The teachings of Krishna as taught by the Gita are the grandest the world has ever known. He who wrote that wonderful poem was one of those rare souls whose lives send a wave of regeneration through the world. The human race will never again see such a brain as his who wrote the Gita.

17. This great poem is held to be the crown jewel of all Indian literature. It is a kind of commentary on the Vedas. It shows us that our battle for spirituality must be fought out in this life; so we must not flee from it, but rather compel it to give us all that it holds. As the Gita typifies this struggle for higher things, it is highly poetical to lay the scene in a battlefield. Krishna in the guise of a charioteer to Arjuna, leader of one of the opposing armies, urges him not to be sorrowful, not to fear death, since he knows he is immortal, that nothing which changes can be in the real nature of man. Through chapter after chapter, Krishna teaches the higher truths of philosophy and religion to Arjuna. It is these teachings which make this poem so wonderful practically the whole of the Vedanta philosophy is included in them.