

# **Bhagavad Geetha - A Way of Life**

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In this article, I have tried my level best to analyze the Bhagavad Gita to lead a successful life and at the end to get rid of from this materialistic world by planning their lives to achieve Moksha i.e. to get relived from the vicious cycle of births and deaths. In this world, most of the people are trying to earn money to become rich by hook or crook in the short period by not hesitating to adopt unfair methods and running behind it which gives only temporary pleasure and comforts. Thus, majority of people are planning to achieve only comforts and luxuries which are unrealistic and mortal one day or other. Very very rarely, few people in crores of population are planning for Moksha which is eternal. Majority of the people are in illusion that the materialistic comforts in this world are real, and not even trying to get rid of from this mortal world. In Bhagavad Geetha, Lord Krishna gave a wonderful message to the public through Arjuna about the mysteries of world and how to lead a meaningful life by following “Dharma”.

Bhagavad Gita is not just for Arjuna but it is for the whole world. It covers topics such as how to control wants, to know about Soul, about God, Practice of Yoga, Devotion and Moksha etc. Lord Krishna gave message that **“truth can never be destroyed, so one should not be afraid of telling truth and doing good.** All desires, feelings and thoughts are born in mind which leads to attachment, a cause of anger. Desire and anger are the greatest enemies of a person. **“Person's best friend and enemy is a person himself, so one must put efforts to raise himself”.** Gita teaches the way of life. But there is a misconception in understanding about ‘not having wants’ mentioned in Bhagavad Gita. According to the teachings of Gita, wants are bound to exist. Arjuna asked questions to Lord Krishna out of desire, Lord explained in detail. **So having wants is not a problem but one should have a full control over his wants. Whether one should be after wants or not is in the hands of concerned person.** Harming anyone to fulfill desire is wrong. Desires create pressure and one must be disciplined to say no to all unjust desires. **Gita explains a justifiable and the right way to fulfill wants.** The essence of Bhagavad Gita is explained through the following salient points:

(1). **To know “Who am I ?”** This false or personal “I” is caught up in the meshes of illusion. This dust of illusion on the mirror of mind and matter makes all the mischief prevalent in the human kingdom. In Chapter III, verse 34, Krishna says to Arjuna: **“In every purpose of the senses are fixed affection and dislike. A wise man should not fall in the power of these two passions, for they are the enemies of man”.** Krishna says, because man possesses senses and sense-organs; looking at the objects of sense, he gets illusioned and is deluded. Lord says, do not be swayed by raga and dvesha, attraction and repulsion, affection and aversion, like and dislike, love and hate. **The gunas are three namely Sattva, Rajas and Tamas.** In the primordial

Nature, they are in perfect equilibrium but in creation they are present in different permutations and combinations, which is why we have so much diversity in creation. In humans, they are responsible for desires, attachments, desire ridden actions and thereby bondage. By knowing the gunas and their basic propensities, a devotee can overcome their influence and achieve perfection. Through detachment, renunciation, transformative practices, devotion and the grace of God, he can overcome the triple gunas and attain salvation. Lord said “Do your own duty; mind your own business; obey the law of your own being”. what is God’s will and what is Karma, and how do they spring into existence? Krishna calls it rajas, the force or the power that compels one to move in the direction of the myriad objects of sense. Rajas has two aspects, says the Gita. Kama-passion-lust is one—the force of attraction that causes affection and love and the many likes; the other is krodha-anger-hate—the force of repulsion that produces the many kinds of dislikes. Kama-passion or attraction, and krodha-anger or repulsion are the two aspects of rajas. As verse 38 in Chapter III puts it: **“As the flame is surrounded by smoke, and a mirror by rust, and as the womb envelops the fetus, so is the universe surrounded by this passion”**. For example, Rajas is like smoke which envelops the flame. The Soul in man, the soul who is man, is fire, is flame, and it is surrounded by smoke—something that the flame does not want. If the quantity of smoke increases, the flame goes out. There are many in our civilization who are spiritually dead. So that is the first step for all of us to take: not to allow the quantity of smoke, our personal likes and dislikes, to increase and envelop our soul-perception. Krishna represents primarily the Higher Self, “Atman” in Sanskrit, pure eternal Spirit which is the One Universal Self of All, the higher most part and inner most essence of my being, your being, and every being. **People are afraid of death which is the reality and inevitable. People love human body which is unreal. Soul can never be destroyed as it is permanent and one must know that body is not you. It is given to you to reap the fruits of good and bad deeds that you have done in your previous births. “You are the soul and not the body”**. The body is the field of activity (Kshetra), in which God or the Self dwells as the Knower of the Field (Kshetrajna). The body is made up of five great elements, the senses, subtle senses, mind, ego and intelligence. It is the seat of desires, attachments, feelings, emotions and such other modifications. The knower of the body is the Supreme Brahman, or the Self, who resides in the body as the in dwelling witness and the ultimate enjoyer. Soul changes bodies according to their **“Karma”** i.e. according to their sins and good deeds, as people changes their dresses when they got torn or become very old and become unfit to wear. If a person do good deeds, he or she will

get good births or otherwise will get bad or worst births like animals. Thus, soul is permanent and immortal. But, body is temporary and mortal.

**(2). Do your duty sincerely, Leave result to God (“Karmanyevadhikaraste” Chapter 2 of Bhagavad Gita):** Do your duty with detachment, renouncing the doership. By merely restraining your senses and controlling your mind, you will not be able to free your soul from the cycle of births and deaths. For success on the path, you have to cultivate detachment and remain free from attraction and aversion to things, besides knowing the difference between actions that bind you and actions that free you. You should engage in performing your obligatory duties as a selfless service and an offering to God, renouncing the desire for their outcome. In other words, you must live without expectations, free from desires, without abandoning your duties and obligations. Perform the duties (Karma) without attachments and insistence on particular results **“like a lotus-leaf is untouched by the water in which it grows”**. Accept the results gracefully and gratefully. True renunciation is the renunciation of the desire for the fruit of one’s actions. This is called in Gita as **“Nishkaama karma”** means one should not worry about result, but they must do their duty sincerely. **Forget “I” which develops “Ego” in you. You are the only means to do things in this world.** In Mahabharata, when Arjuna was dithering while performing his duty as a warrior, then he was directed by Lord Krishna to perform his duty as a warrior and leave result to Him. Thus, everybody must perform their duties sincerely without fail and leave result to the God. They should think that they are the only means to discharge their duties and end results are left to the Lord, Who give fruits according to their “Karma” i.e. according to their works.

**(3). Control over desires (Indhriya Nigraham – Yadaasamharatechaayam - Chapter - 2):** Stabilize your mind by overcoming desires. Your mind is the seat of your desires, thoughts and feelings. Your wandering senses keep your mind in a state of turmoil. They are responsible for your desire for sense objects and your attachment to them. Your desires and attachments in turn subject you to conflicting emotions and mental instability, as you respond to the pairs of opposites with attraction or aversion according to your inherent nature. An unstable mind is characterized by egoism, attachments and desire ridden actions. A person of unstable mind is not fit for salvation. His consciousness keeps wandering around sense objects, and he remains entangled in the distractions of the world. The instability of the mind is therefore the first problem, which an aspirant has to resolve to know himself and achieve liberation. However, how can anyone stabilize his mind? The Bhagavad-Gita suggests that only by disengaging the mind from the external world and withdrawing into oneself one can stabilize it. It is not an easy task. Through self-discipline a devotee should restrain his senses and develop detachment from the sense objects. Then only he can experience peace and equanimity. With the attainment of inner tranquility, his mind becomes stabilized in silence, and his suffering would come to an end. Then, he can easily establish his mind in God and achieve union with him. Like a tortoise one should cultivate perfect sense of mastery. When required one should employ the senses fully and

withdraw when not required. **“Bhagavad Gita is not against having desires, but stresses that one MUST have control over desires and have limits that is one must not be greedy”.** Otherwise, if desires are not fulfilled they leads to worries and worries in turn leads to lack of peace and anger. The result of anger is losing mental balance and down falling will start and the consequence is **“Self Ruin”**. **One could not achieve “Athma Gnyna” who is not coming out of Worldly desires.**

**(4). Live a pure life and one should overcome the impulsiveness of negative factors like anger, lust and greed (Shanknotihaiva Chapter -16):** Raja guna, desire is smoke: when we construct a house, we will built a fireplace to have a proper chimney to let out the smoke in a proper direction. That is the first step—the smoke of our personal desires must be thrown out. The moisture of passion must be dried up and we must by control purify ourselves. Purification is the first step. There are four kinds of purity: (1) Mental purity; (2) Purity of emotions and Character, or Moral purity; (3) Purity of speech; (4) Purity of deeds or actions. (5) Kill selfishness. Purity is the key word for this first stage of development. Live according to **“Dharma”** means the **“Right Way”** of living. **“Dharmo Rakshithi Rakshithaha”** meaning of this quotation is, if you protect dharma, it will protect you. While living in this world physical and emotional detachments are impossible. Continuous desires results in attachment, whereas wisdom results in detachment which is considered as divine. One should attach only to God which is real and permanent. Detachment does not mean not loving and taking care for your family, friends, parents and world around you. **Gita actually explains the way to free from emotions of love and jealous. It tells us to live like water on a lotus leaf.** In Mahabharata, while Yudhistara (Dharma Raja) followed dharma, Dhuroyodana followed adharma and became a main cause for Kurukshetra war.

**(5). Self Confidence (Shraddhamayoyampurushah-Yoyatshraddhahsaevasaha (Chapter - 17):** One should have faith in reality and accept it, which is a great source of strength. A man is what his faith is, as the faith so will be our desires and thoughts and action.

**(6). Sthithapragnya:** In Gita, Lord Krishna explained about **“Sthithapragnya”**. It means one should not become emotional or over joyous when one achieves victories and become very nervous when failures occur. This means, one should maintain balance between success and failure.

**(7). Moral Duties and Self Control:** Gita explains about our moral duties and talks about holistic spiritual development and way to achieve these through self control, mental purity and dedication to God.

**(8). Follow Swadharma (Chapter 3 of Bhagavad Gita):** Swadharma here refers to one’s own religion. You follow only your religion, because it is very much suitable to you to live in a right way and discharge your duties.

(9). **Spend Some Time in Pranayama (Chapter- 3 of Bhagavad Gita)**: It means do some breathing exercises, which are good for health. All we know that “Health is Wealth”, if we have good health, we can perform our duties in time and in a better way.

(10). **Meditation (Yoga), Prayer, Moderation in Food, Sleep, Speech, Exercise, Recreation and Elimination of Stress (Yuktaaharviharasya Chapter -6 of Bhagavad Gita)**: Timely food, timely sleep, avoiding unnecessary talk, regular exercise and recreation is very very essential for leading a good life. Daily prayer and meditation will bring peace and happiness (Swalpamapyasyadharman-Ytrayatemahatobhayat –Chapter 2).

(11). **Integrated Personality ( Nastibuddhirayuktasya - Chapter 2)**: Integrated personality integrates the various dimensions of the personality into a balanced and integrated whole. It aims at developing the whole or the total human being which gives tremendous satisfaction.

(12). **Finding out one’s own temperament (Swadharma Chapter – 3)**: Here temperament means, one should introspect his own character especially regarding his demerits and rectify himself, otherwise it affects his personality. By this, he can identify and perform his duties (Swadharma) at various levels of his life, for example as a father/mother, brother, son/daughter etc in the family and also discharging his duties in the society, for example as a teacher, soldier and other different professions.

(14). **Implementing and practicing of Bhagavadgita is important rather than parayanam (Reading) and preaching**: Lord Krishna said implementing and practicing what is said in Bhagavadgita is important rather than parayanam (Reading) and preaching. Hence, one should concentrate on implementation part rather than just reading and preaching Bhagavadgita.

(13). **Duty of the God**: In Gita, Lord Krishna said “Surrender to me with devotion, nobody is nearer (affectionate) or enemy to me. I only give results according to their Karma. Although I am impartial and show no favors, I readily respond to my devotees. I love them and reduce their sufferings and give Moksha for those people who prey on me without asking for any favour (Phalapeksha Rahita) and follow the following principles:

(a) Sama Bhava (Who love and treat all creatures equally) thereby maintaining “Eco Balance” on this earth (b) Friendly behavior (c) No ego (d) Treating happiness and sorrows equally (Sthitha Pragnya) (e) Having patience (f) Self Control (g) Performing Dhyana and Anustana (h) Whole heartedly praying God (i) Non- Violence (j) Pure heart (k) Respecting elders and Acharyas (Teachers) (l) Showchya (Cleanliness) (m) Sthiryam (Courageous) (n) Self Confidence (o) Coming out from materialistic world (luxuries) and knowing about “Self” i.e. “Who am I” and what is the real purpose of life (q) Knowing Adhyatmika Gnyana (Knowledge about God and Soul) (r) Sacrificing nature (leaving selfishness) (s) Lastly, to know that man also can become God, if he follows the above principles scrupulously”. We all know that “**Rama born as a man and became God**”.

To conclude, Bhagavad Gita is the way of life to all of us because it shows how to live a right life. To sum up: It says one should know that he is not the body but the spiritual Self i.e. Soul”, stabilize your mind by overcoming desires, do your duty with detachment, renouncing the doership, acknowledge the presence of God in you and in everything, culminate in devotion to God and know the truth about the three gunas – **Sattva, Rajas and Tamas**. Lastly, by combining the best of the prescribed yogas namely **Karma Yoga, Jnana yoga, Sanyasa Yoga, Atma Samyama Yoga and Bhakti Yoga**, casting away egoism and demonic qualities, overcoming the impurities, and cultivating pure devotion, one can escape from the cycle of births and deaths. Actions performed in this manner do not bind the people. Taking shelter in **Him**, by **His** grace, they attain the eternal and ultimately merged in **Him (God)**.