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*Jesus: You Weren't Supposed to Know*

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*The Yoga Sutras: For a 21<sup>st</sup> Century*

*Song of the Lord*  
*The Bhagavad Gita*

Introduction by  
*Thomas Paul Emerson*

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# Introduction

If you could talk to God, what would you want to know? Do you think it's even possible for a person to have a conversation with God?

Christians, along with many other faiths, believe that God can be born here on earth and we can actually speak to God, like people did with Jesus.

In India they believe that a man named *Krishna* was also an incarnation of God—or he was God born here on earth. Krishna says that he comes to earth from time to time to teach the world the truth, and it's usually when the world is most in need of help.

Krishna lived in India around the time of King David, near what today is the city of Delhi. This area was called the

Kingdom of *Kuru*, with a capital city of Hastinapura, and ruled by two brothers—King *Pandu* and his older brother *Dhritarāshtra*.

While Dhritarāshtra was the eldest, he was born blind, so his younger brother rose to the throne. This went on successfully for years until Pāndu met with some misfortune after a hunting accident, which left him cursed and eventually betrayed, and he died at a relatively young age. After his death his son *Yudhishtira* would have succeeded him, but Dhritarāshtra wanted his own son *Duryodhana* to take the throne.

Many people considered Duryodhana a very dishonest man, and very corrupt. And Yudhishtira was instead considered a very righteous man. So the loyalties of the kingdom became split on this issue as to who should rule? After several unsuccessful attempts to negotiate a truce, the two families eventually went to

war against each other for 18 gruesome days. It's hard to imagine a worst-case scenario than a really bloody war between you and your relatives!

## *Our Story*

Our story begins after the war, with *Sanjaya*, King Dhritarāshtra's advisor, telling the king about an extraordinary conversation that he heard on the battlefield between one of Pāndu's sons, Prince *Arjuna*, and his chariot driver Krishna. The king will soon hear what Arjuna has learned from Krishna (God) about the nature of our Spirit, and about life after death.

After this conversation both Sanjaya and Arjuna will come to believe that Krishna is actually God speaking with them right there on the battlefield! This conversation was then recorded in what is called the *Bhāgavad Gita* scriptures.



Just like most Christians believe that Jesus was God incarnate, this is the same thing believed to be the case with Krishna. He sometimes refers to himself as God, or as the Supreme Spirit; and sometimes he talks about God as if it's something beyond himself. This was also the case with Jesus; he sometimes referred to God as "Our Father who art in heaven" (Matthew 6:9), and at other times he would say; "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30), or, "He who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9).

## *The Battlefield*

Most historians agree that the characters in our story are probably based on actual people and real events. The battle was said to have taken place in a field in *Kurukshetra* India, which is about 90 miles north of Hastinapura.



**Above:** *Kurukshetra* is where the battle took place. The city of *Hastinapura* was the official residence of the kingdom (near modern day Delhi). After the battle Arjuna continued to live and rule in *Hastinapura* with his family, and Krishna went on to become the ruler of *Dvaraka* over on the west coast of India.

There is some debate among historians as to how the dialog in this story actually came about? Some say that the author was Arjuna's grandfather, *Vyāsa*, and that he wrote down this conversation after the battle.

Others say that *Vyāsa* might have just written down his own recollections of conversations he may have had with Krishna, and he may have inserted them into this story about the war, perhaps as a way of preserving them. He may have chosen this battle because he and his countrymen knew that Krishna and Arjuna had fought there together.

Other scholars insist that it's also plausible that this conversation could have occurred just as the Gita says.

Regardless, everyone agrees that this story unfolds on many different levels, from a story about the basic struggle between good and evil, to one that

includes higher and higher levels of understanding, with one layered upon another. Krishna is going to explain all sorts of different spiritual states, stages, problems, and influences; and most of all—how we can find lasting peace in heaven!

In the *Mahābharata* scriptures, of which the Bhaḡavad Gita is just one episode (book VI) it explains what has happened between these two families to bring them to this point of a war. We see that Dhritarāshtra's son Duryodhana, is a very good example of evil. He has even tried to have his relatives murdered so he can get his hands on the throne. First, he cheats them out of their share of the kingdom, and then he tries to get rid of them with a war.

Yudhishtira, instead, is a good example of a fair and honest person. He

is the kind of man that is honest and who you would want as a ruler.

## *Good & Evil*

Yudhishtira is so good that he has even forgiven Duryodhana, even though he has been treated so badly by him. Despite being lied to, cheated, and almost murdered; he's still willing to forgive him.

Unfortunately, Duryodhana can't believe that his cousin can so easily forgive him, and he's sure that he'll be attacked someday when he least expects it. So Duryodhana is determined to get rid of his cousin's entire family—therefore Krishna tells Arjuna to defend himself against such evil and fight! And once again, this is after several failed attempts to negotiate a truce. Krishna even went to Duryodhana himself before the war and pleaded with him to accept a truce with his cousin. So Krishna sees that this war is coming whether they like it or not.

## *War*

Many scholars have certainly raised this question; as to whether the Bhāgavad Gita promotes war—because as you'll see Krishna is going to explain to Arjuna that he has a moral responsibility to fight? That's why it's important to remember that Yudhishtira's side has done everything they can to try and avoid a war. So Krishna is saying, if you have done everything that you can, and the threat is still coming at you, then stop worrying and get ready to fight!

## *This Book*

The title “Bhāgavad Gita” means, “Song of the Lord,” and like the Psalms, it was originally written as a hymn, but because these translated verses usually include quite a few additional lines, they

lose their metrical structure and rhythm as stanzas.

This story has been translated into every major language, with dozens of English translations. One of the earliest was from Sir Charles Wilkins, in 1785, and this is the translation that I have started with here. I have also read and incorporated several other good translations of the Gita. While all these translations are all really wonderful to read, they all still include quite a few Indian words. Words like; Ātman, jīva, dharma, sattva, māyā, samādhi, and many others.

Since the message is universal, it has to be that it can be written in every language without needing to include Indian words. The reason that I decided to write this book was to try and do just that, and replace all the Indian terms with English words. In some of the texts there are also many different names used

for Krishna and Arjuna, and a lot of other people are also mentioned on the battlefield. So I have also tried to simplify that aspect.

Here's just one example; this past summer a young friend of mine asked me to recommend a good book on eastern religion? She had never read anything about it, and wondered what I would suggest? I instantly thought of the Bhagavad Gita. So I brought her one of my favorite translations. After a couple weeks it was clear that some of the terms were confusing her. The Gita can be hard to follow, especially when you throw in a bunch of foreign words, it can get very tricky to decipher.

In this book I have tried to substitute any Indian terms with the closest English equivalent, or explanation, to make the verses a little easier to understand. And many of these Indian words have had to



be more defined or explained, because often we don't have a single word in English that means exactly the same thing. Or, take the word "dharma" for example, this word can mean "harmony," "duty," or "responsibility," "destiny," or "fate." So to substitute it, you have to decide in what context the word is being used?

I have also changed some of the language structure into a simpler style, so a younger reader might feel a little more at home.

## West vs. East

There are several basic differences between eastern and western thinking, and it might be helpful to mention these here to make the verses a little easier later on.

In the east one of the central ideas is that God is ultimately *infinite*, and

beyond our understanding or comprehension. And yet, this Infinite God, at the same time manifests itself as a Supreme Being. So when God is infinite, omnipresent, and beyond our comprehension, this is what in the east they call the “Self,” spelled with a capital “S.” In the west this is what many religions call the “Spirit.” However, this omni-present Self also has a Supreme Personality, and this Supreme Being is also what they call “God,” or “*Íswara*.”

You are also going to find in Krishna’s teachings that he talks about reincarnation. Unlike in the west where we believe that we’re only born and resurrected once; they say that the eternal soul can be resurrected many times and in many different places. Because if an eternal soul has no beginning or end, and yet at some point you are born on earth, why couldn’t birth happen more than once for a eternal soul?

Consequently, in the west we also tend to think that the soul has only one chance to be saved; and while in the east they believe that a similar spiritual process takes place at death (we experience a panoramic view, or “Judgment Day,” and then the soul goes on to heaven or hell), but they believe that this happens to the soul over and over, or life after life.

Scientifically speaking, in western religion the universe is also thought to be about 6,000 years old, and in the east they believe that we are already billions of years into a cycle that’s trillions of years long.

Also in the west we tend to believe in chance, or random coincidences. For example; if a person is born during a drought, or if they’re struck by lightning; we might say that this person is unlucky, and that they were simply born in the wrong place and at the wrong time.

However, from an eastern perspective—everything happens for a reason; and there are no coincidences.

They believe that everything is the result of our own actions that are coming back to us (“yea shall reap as thou has sown”), and whatever happens to us is always a reaction to our own previous behavior. Therefore, they say that while we may be free to act the way we will, our actions inevitably produce specific consequences, which makes our future more or less certain if you take into account everything that we’ve done.

Also in the west, we tend to believe that the time that we are born, or that we die, is also a coincidence in terms of whatever else might be happening in the universe. However, in the Bhagavad Gita, as well as in the Egyptian and Mayan scriptures, they believed that if the soul leaves the body at a certain time—such as during a particular planetary cycle—

this can also indicate the direction that the soul will take in the afterlife.

Or, in the case of a birth, the *Star of Bethlehem* is an example of where a stellar appearance in the heavens can be a sign of something that we can then expect to see on earth. Therefore, if one of these planetary alignments occurs when a soul is born—they believe that a natural synchronistic correlation exists between all things, and this is the basis for their belief in things like astrology, numerology, or palmistry.

In other words, in the east they would say that everything is interrelated, and that all things happen as part of a synchronistic whole—in the same way that it's not a coincidence when salmon migrate to the ocean at the same time every year, or birds that migrate annually along the same flyway. Or, when a fish swims up on the beach in the spring to lay her eggs on a full moon night? In this

same way, they believe that these astronomical and natural forces of nature are all interwoven. Krishna will soon go into some very interesting explanations as to how all these spiritual principles work.

### *As Our Story Begins*

In the early morning hours before dawn, there were members from both families beginning to assemble on the battlefield—with relatives, uncles, nephews, grandfathers, grandchildren, teachers and students; all gathering for this epic war. Positioned in a chariot between the two armies is the great Prince Arjuna, who is also one of Yudhishtira's brothers.

And in the chariot with him is Krishna, who today is his charioteer. They're fighting on Arjuna's brother's side; or you could say they're fighting on the side of righteousness. Our story begins with

Sanjaya telling the king who he saw on the battlefield. This field included many well-respected members of the families—great warriors, statesmen, and teachers. However, before long our story is only about a conversation between Krishna (God), and Arjuna (his disciple). And it is here, while waiting for this battle to begin, that Krishna explains to Arjuna their ancestor’s ancient science of Self-realization, or yoga.

## *Timeline*

There is some debate as to when Krishna was actually born? Some experts place the date before 3200 BCE, and some as late as 700 BCE—so there’s a large discrepancy in opinions as to when Krishna was actually here?

There are two popular theories as to why this discrepancy may exist. One theory suggests that an error might have

been made while calculating the Indian calendar; and the other is that there could have been more than one prophet named Krishna.

In the east they believe that there are four great ages (*yugas*) that represent very long periods in our spiritual evolution. Things here on earth go from a state of “heaven on earth,” to a slow and steady decline that eventually leads to widespread greed, dishonesty, and violence. Then once things reach an all-time low, it then gradually starts evolving toward a better world again—and these cycles go on over and over, like the rise and fall of a civilization (the ancient seers say that we are still in the lowest stage).

Traditionally it is thought that Krishna was born at the end of the last *Dwapara* age, which also marks the beginning of the darkest period in our evolution. According to these dates this would place Krishna’s birth sometime before 3200



BCE, which has historically been considered as the period when Krishna was here on earth.

The problem with this date is that archeological artifacts found in excavations at Kurukshetra, suggest that the war may have occurred some time between 1100-800 BCE. This is more than 2,000 years later than the previous date, and this has led some researchers to suspect that the traditional date for Krishna's birth may be incorrect?

This theory, that there might have been an error in the timeline, was further supported in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century when *Swami Yuktswar* discovered what he believed was a simple mathematical error that occurred when the priests were calculating their ages. He says that when he corrected this error the date for the last Dwapara age, would have occurred roughly at the same time as the date of the evidence at Kurukshetra.

Other scholars have another theory; they believe that there could have been more than one messiah known as Krishna? Just as there is more than one person that was called “Buddha,” the name “Krishna” means “dark” skin, and there could have been others who had this name. So the Krishna that is reported to have lived until 3102 BCE, they say, could be a different man than the one that lived at the time of the Kurukshetra war—and they insist that both these men could still be the same prophet, just the same soul reincarnated.

These experts say that they believe that this earlier incarnation took place in the south, and the northern one (the one in our story), is thought to be Krishna’s more recent life here on earth. They point to the fact that this second incarnation theory is also implied in chapter four, when Krishna himself says:

*“Whenever there is a major decline of righteousness on earth, and the rise of injustice, then I incarnate myself again. I am born in nearly every age on earth to protect the good, to destroy evil, and to reestablish justice.” (4.07-08)*

The Bhāgavad Gita is one of the most extraordinary poems ever written, and for thousands of years the advanced yogis in India have again and again affirmed that these verses are truly God (Iśwara) speaking to us. When I read the Gita I get that same tingling feeling that I get when I read the “Sermon on the Mount.” In both cases I feel like I am actually listening to God speaking to me. May you too be inspired and uplifted by this extraordinary *Song of the Lord*.

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