

# Gita Jayanti

By  
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THE GITA Jayanti, or the birthday of the *Bhagavad Gita*, is celebrated throughout India by all the admirers and lovers of this most sacred scripture on the eleventh day (Ekadashi) of the bright half of the month of Margaseersha (December-January), according to the Hindu almanac. It was on this day that Sanjaya narrated to King Dhritarashtra the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, and thus made the glorious teachings of the Lord available to us, and to people of the world, for all time.

The Gita Jayanti marks one of the greatest days in the history of mankind. Nearly six thousand years ago on that day a dazzling flash of brilliant light lit up the firmament of human civilization. That flash, that marvellous spiritual effulgence, was the message of the *Bhagavad Gita*, given by the Lord Himself on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. Unlike ordinary flashes of light which die away after a split-second, this brilliant flash of that memorable day has continued to shine through the centuries, and even now illumines the path of humanity on its onward march to perfection.

The *Gita* is the most beautiful and the only truly philosophical song. It contains sublime lessons on wisdom and philosophy. It is the "Song Celestial". It is the universal gospel. It contains the message of life that appeals to all, irrespective of race, creed, age or religion.

The *Gita* was given to us about six thousand years ago through Arjuna, an Indian prince, by Sri Krishna, the Lord incarnate. The teachings are based on the *Upanishads*, the ancient, revealed metaphysical classics of India. The *Gita* shows a way to rise above the world of duality and the pairs of opposites, and to acquire eternal bliss and immortality. It is a gospel of action. It teaches the rigid performance of one's duty in society, and a life of active struggle, keeping the inner being untouched by outer surroundings, and renouncing the fruits of actions as offerings unto the Lord.

The *Gita* is a source of power and wisdom. It strengthens you when you are weak, and inspires you when you feel dejected and feeble. It teaches you to embrace righteousness and to resist unrighteousness.

The *Gita* is not merely a book or just a scripture. It is a living voice carrying an eternally indispensable and vital message to mankind. Its verses embody words of wisdom coming from the infinite ocean of knowledge, the Absolute Itself.

The voice of the *Gita* is the call of the Supreme. It is the divine sound explained. The primal source of all existence, all power, is the manifested sound, Om. This is the Divine Word. It is Nada Brahman, whose unceasing call is: "Be ye all ever merged in the eternal, unbroken, continuous consciousness of the Supreme Truth." This is the sublime message that the great *Gita* elaborates and presents in all comprehensiveness and in a universally acceptable form. It is verily this message of the *Bhagavad Gita* that I wish to recall and reproclaim with emphasis to you.

To be always conscious of the Divine, to ever feel the Divine Presence, to live always in the awareness of the Supreme Being in the chambers of your heart and everywhere around you, is verily to live a life of fullness and divine perfection on earth itself. Such constant remembrance of God and such an attitude of mind will release you forever from the clutches of Maya and free you from all fear. To forget the Supreme is to fall into Maya. To forget Him is to be assailed by fear. To live in unbroken remembrance of the Supreme Truth is to remain always in the region of Light, far beyond Maya's reach.

Mark carefully how the *Gita* stresses again and again this lofty message. The Lord declares: "Keep thou thy mind in Me, in Me place thy reason".

In another verse He says: "Therefore, at all times remember Me and fight. You will surely attain Me, having thus offered yourself".

And yet again: "Perform thou action, remaining united with Me at heart".

The *Gita* guides you to glory with the watchwords: "Be thou divine-minded, devoted to Me as your goal, and let your subconscious mind be divine".

The Lord gives the following firm assurance also: "I become the saviour from this mortal world for those whose minds are set on Me".

Such is the most illuminating message of the *Gita*, seeking to lead man to a life of perfection even while performing his ordained role here. Long has this message been neglected by man. Forgetting the Lord, the world has turned towards sense indulgence and mammon. A terrible price has been paid. O man, enough of this forgetfulness! The Lord has warned you against heedlessness: "If, out of egoism, thou wilt not hear, then thou shalt perish".

It is a matter of great regret that many young men and women of India know very little of this most unique scripture. One cannot consider oneself as having attained a good standard of education if one does not have a sound knowledge of the *Srimad Bhagavad Gita*. All post-graduate knowledge, all research in universities is mere husk or chaff when compared to the wisdom of the *Gita*.

Live in the spirit of the teachings of the *Gita*. Mere talks or lectures will not help you in any way. Become a practical "man-of-the-*Gita*".

The *Gita* may be summarised in the following seven verses:

1. "Uttering the one-syllabled Om, the Brahman, and remembering Me, he who departs, leaving the body thus, attains the Supreme Goal".
2. "It is meet, O Lord, that the world delights and rejoices in Thy praise; the demons fly in fear to all quarters, and all the hosts of Siddhas bow to Thee!"
3. "With hands and feet everywhere, with eyes, heads and mouths everywhere, with ears everywhere, He exists in the world, enveloping all".
4. "Whosoever meditates on the omniscient, ancient ruler of the whole world, minuter than an atom, the supporter of all, of form inconceivable, effulgent like the sun, such a one goeth beyond the darkness of ignorance".
5. "They, the wise, speak of the indestructible Asvattha, having its roots above and branches below, whose leaves are the metres or hymns; he who knows it is a knower of the *Vedas*".
6. "And I am seated in the hearts of all; from Me are memory and knowledge, as well as their absence. I am verily that which has to be known by all the *Vedas*; I am indeed the author of Vedanta, and the knower of the *Vedas* am I".
7. "Fix thy mind on Me; be devoted to Me; sacrifice to Me; bow down to Me; having thus united thy whole Self with Me, taking Me as the Supreme Lord, thou shalt verily come to Me".

Read the whole of the *Gita* on Sundays and other holidays. Study carefully again and again the verses in the second discourse, which deal with the state of the Sthitaprajna (a perfected Yogi and sage). Also study the eight nectarine verses in the twelfth discourse.

The study of the *Gita* alone is sufficient for the purpose of scriptural study. You will find in it a solution to all your problems. The more you study it with devotion and faith, the deeper will your knowledge become, the more penetrative would be your insight, and the clearer your thinking. Even if you live in the spirit of one verse of the *Gita*, all your miseries will come to an end and you will attain the goal of life—immortality and eternal peace.

None but the Lord can bring out such a marvellous and unprecedented book, which grants peace to its readers, and which guides them in the attainment of supreme bliss.

The teachings of the *Gita* are broad, sublime and universal. They do not belong to any particular cult, sect, creed, age, place or country. They are meant for all. They are within the reach of all. The *Gita* has a message for the solace, peace, freedom, salvation and perfection of all human beings.

Take a resolve on Gita Jayanti that you will read at least one discourse of the *Gita* daily. Recite the Fifteenth Discourse before taking your meals. This is done at the Sivanandashram.

Keep a small pocket-sized edition of the *Gita* with you at all times. Mark a few verses in it which inspire you. Everyday, while you are waiting for your bus or train, or whenever you have a little leisure, pull out the book and read these verses. You will be ever inspired.

May you all lead the life taught by the *Gita*! May the *Gita*, the blessed Mother of the *Vedas*, guide and protect you! May it nourish you with the milk of the ancient wisdom of the *Upanishads*!

Glory to Lord Krishna, the Divine Teacher! Glory to Sri Vyasa, the poet of poets, who composed the *Gita*! May his blessings be upon you all!

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