

Introduction to Upanishads and Bhagwat Gita

Pre read guide

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<https://www.hinduwebsite.com/upanishadsbrief.asp>

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/atd-fscj-philosophy/chapter/the-bhagavad-gita/>

Introduction to Upanishads and Bhagwat Gita

Shishir Lakhani (11 July 2020)

Om – God – Supreme consciousness; Supreme self; Ultimate truth; The God within; mind body spirit



Hinduism – A Vedic tradition

(~5000 years?)

History of **Vedas (knowledge) – Ved Vyas** (who also wrote Mahabharata the Epic from which sprang Bhagwat Gita)

Vedas (4 main streams)

Rig Veda – 1017 hymns (Upanishads the philosophical aspect)

Yajurveda - Veda of prose mantras

Samaveda - Veda of melodies and chants

Atharvaveda - the procedures for everyday life

Hinduism – A Vedic tradition

passed on mostly through word of mouth **poetry**

History of Vedas (knowledge) – Ved Vyas (Wrote Mahabharata the Epic battle from which sprang Bhagwat Gita - Battle being the metaphor for human condition; challenges of morality - rights and wrongs.

Poetic Epics that display ways of the world

- Mahabharata
- Bhagwat Gita – 18 Chapters – considered an Upanishad - song of God (part of Mahabharata) – Krishna
- Ramayana – idealism - Lord Rama
- Puranas (ancient chronicles) constantly evolving tradition (Mythological - fantastical Gods Goddesses not unlike Greek mythologies) Polytheistic elements in the mythology and traditions 330 million Gods – All lead to same place. Each **ATMAN** (soul) is one with God.

Bhagwat Gita – Krishna revelation of to Arjun

WORLD IS ILLUSORY

Tat Tvam Asi (thou art that)



Life lessons from Bhagavad Gita

*Analogy of 5 horse Chariot and a rider (**Kurukshetra** (Epic War) Krishna the guide to the warrior Arjuna)*

Human Body = chariot

5 horses are the senses

Driver is the intellect (judgment)

SOUL (ATMAN) IS IMMORTAL. ...

CHANGE IMPERMANENCE (death) IS THE LAW OF UNIVERSE...

BEING GOOD IS A REWARD ITSELF....

WE CAME EMPTY HANDED, AND WILL LEAVE EMPTY
HANDED....

EGO ANGER AND SUCH VICES CAUSE DELUSION....

EVERYTHING HAPPENS FOR A REASON....

(End of Vedas) **Vedanta**

Upanishads (Philosophical side) Key concepts

Upanishads ~600 BC Axial age (numerous texts – ascetic search for universal knowledge meaning of life – liberation - **Moksha** = **Nirvana** in Buddhism = **Sahaj** Sikhs) - Many authors and constant evolution. Message - We are part of a whole

Reincarnation keeps you coming back **Avatars** as you gradually advance your consciousness over births and rebirths. *Jesus like Krishna and Buddha considered Enlightened Avatars*

Harnessing the Ego 'I' (identity) and needs and wants binds you to circle of life and death

Belief in **Karma** – Cause and effect – Causality - self adjusting reciprocal morality

Do your duty **Dharma** – World is imperfect - motivation is crucial rather than outcome – desires and materialism cause grief & dissatisfaction – Be unselfish **Seva** compassion

Ahimsa Non violence / **Yoga** / Puja – prayers devotion / **Guru** / Generosity

Upanishads (hundreds of them)

Upanishad meaning – destroy ignorance

Belief in non-dualism – We and God are all but one – revealed through meditation (higher consciousness) - **Advaita** (monism)

Purpose of Life (....Not necessarily monastic denunciation from society)

- **Dharma** – duties and purpose – doing the right moral thing - Some principles **Ahimsa** (non violence); **Satya** (tell truth); **Asetya** (no stealing) ; **Brahmcharya** (do not overindulge) **Aparigraha** (no greed); **Kshama** (patience) **Daya** (compassion) **Dana** (charity) **Puja** (worship) **Svadhaya** (learn) **Japa** (chant)
- **Artha** – Work for prosperity
- **Kama** – Life joys *
- **Moksha – Enlightenment – The ultimate goal**

Upanishads (Big message)

Advaita (non dualistic) Vedanta – space and time and existence ultimately illusionary – **Maya**

Impersonal reality of **Brahman** – non duality

Doctrine that identifies the individual self (**Atman**)
.....with the ultimate reality (Brahman).

Reality of Brahman transcends consciousness and personality

Especially associated with the Indian philosopher Shankara's meditations (c 788–820) - Atman is unknowable unless we lose our individuality

the space between bondage
and liberation measures 2 feet only.
bondage says 'this is mine'
and liberation says 'nothing is mine.'

— — — — —
mahopanishad

Moksha - Self realization; Intense Awakening
Enlightenment – Peace and oneness liberation of the
soul from life of illusion - Release from **samsara** - life of
dissatisfaction (suffering as mentioned in Buddhism)

Become one with Brahman – Moksha

4 suggested ways (**margs**) to achieve moksha

- **Devotion(bhakti yoga)** Devotion and prayers
- **Action (karma yoga)** - Duty without need for reward
- **Meditation (raja yoga)** Physical mental and emotional temperance
- **Knowledge (jnana yoga)** Self awareness and control

Yoga we practice (Pantanjali) is part of karma and raja yoga
(calming and healthy body mind and spirit connection)

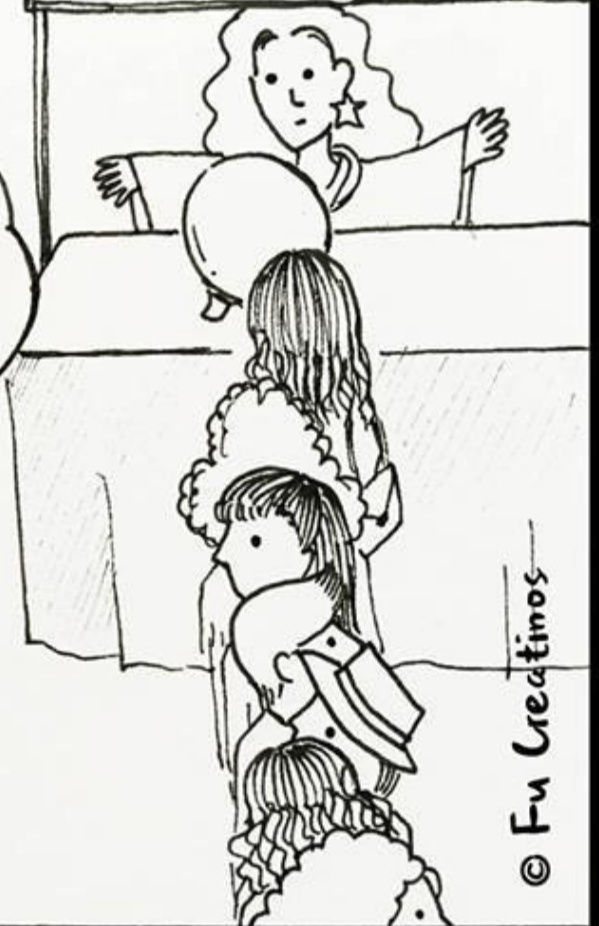
PAST LIFE READING



MEDITATION



FUTURE TELLING



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SPIRITUAL FAIR

Some Thoughts quotes (spiritual metaphysical)

For the man who has conquered it, the mind becomes his greatest friend, For others mind becomes their worst enemy – Bhagwat Gita

Many faces to one supreme being- pluralism Hindus have no blasphemy rules – *many rivers lead to the same ocean*

As you sow you shall reap - Karma (In this life and others – payback)

Fish cannot fathom what the ocean looks like

Spoon does not know the taste of soup

Key thoughts and quotes on subject (spiritual metaphysical)

Pure consciousness absolute bliss eternal wisdom

We are essentially divine – The Self

Impermanence – death – only the body dies – Atman lives on

Individual ocean waves rise up, remain for a time and then die away (no birth no death part of the same ocean)

Good writers 'gurus' on subject (spiritual metaphysical)

Ramkrishna Paramahansa (1836) *Devi Goddess follower as well as Ram, Allah and Jesus (pluralism)*

Vivekananda (late 1800's student of Ramakrishna)

We have a theory of evil we call it ignorance

Ramana Maharshi (late 1800's) *'of all the thoughts that rise in the mind, the thought 'I' is the first thought'*

Ram Dass – more contemporary *Inspiration is God making contact with itself.*

Deepak Chopra – more contemporary *In the midst of movement and chaos, keep stillness inside of you.*

Other Thinkers (spiritual metaphysical)

Thales of Miletus – *God in all things (pantheist/monist) c 620BC*

Plotinus – *Unity with God through meditation 205 CE*

Kabir – *The one who is aware of others sufferings is Holy 1440 CE*

Spinoza – *Finite rests upon infinite 1632 CE*

Schopenhauer – *Transcendence 'Universal will' – idealist 1788 CE*

Henry David Thoreau – *Transcendentalism influenced by Bhagwat Gita – non violence - Romanticism 1803 CE*

Yeats – *Mirror after mirror – looking for a face I had before creation 1865CE*

Carl Jung - *Collective unconsciousness 1875 CE*

Einstein – *No barrier between us and others 1879 CE*

Alan Watts – *Consciousness- like trying to bite your own teeth 1915 CE*

Fritjof Capra – *Tao of Physics (New Age connectedness) 1939 CE*

that which is not comprehended by
the mind but by which the
mind comprehends—know that...

— swami prabhavananda, the upanishads.

Off shoots of Hinduism – Buddhism Jainism and Sikhism (some context)

Buddha - Buddhism – disliked rituals and caste
(600 BC)

Mahavir - Jainism – similar and also emphasizes
nonviolence and vegetarianism (600 BC)

Guru Nanak - Sikh tradition – equality, devotional
path – non pacifist (1500's CE)



CANADIAN TIRED

