

The Spiritual Scientist

An ezine for those who think!

Bhagavad Gita - A Self-Help Book



Question: Is the *Bhagavad-gita* a self-help book?

Answer: The *Bhagavad-gita* is much more than a self-help book; it is a book of self-discovery, self-empowerment and self-actualization. Let's see how.

Self-discovery: The *Bhagavad-gita* goes to the root of self-help by prompting us to ask the fundamental question: who is the self that we are trying to help? Then, through penetrating analysis,

the *Gita* (2.17) shows how we are beings of consciousness, not things of matter. This *Gita* insight given five thousand years ago places us ahead of cutting-edge quantum physics that is just recognizing consciousness to be a fundamental reality in the universe. The *Gita* (15.7) takes us further into self-discovery by pointing out that our innate longing for happiness stems from our being eternal parts of the Supreme, who is the source and reservoir of all happiness.

Self-empowerment: The *Gita* is, at its core, a book for self-empowerment, for which it offers a spectrum of techniques grouped under the rubric of yoga. Yoga, the *Gita* explains, is not just a system of bodily exercises for shaping the body, but is the spiritual technology for the finite soul to plug into the infinite potential of the Supreme. The most powerful current accessible by plugging into the Supreme is the current of divine love (6.47). Also known as *bhakti*, this love-current electrifies us with a divine power (11.33) that enables us to break free from self-defeating behaviors and attitudes, as well as to unleash our untapped mental and spiritual powers.

Self-actualization: The *Gita* explains that love alone enables to rise to our fullest potential and to thereby actualize our true selves. When our love for the divine transforms us into conductors for divine love, then that conduction bring about a twofold effect: it raises us upwards toward spiritual fulfillment and also brings the divine energy downwards for social reform. This twofold *bhakti* dynamic places us in the intersection of the otherwise-exclusive circles of self-realization and world-transformation. The *Gita* enables us to see the world not just as the realm of illusion, but as the potential arena for God's glorification. *Gita* spirituality is thus motivated not by an other-worldly renunciation that rejects this world as false, but by an other-worldly love that subsumes this world within its scope of love. Thus, self-actualization and world-transformation become the parallel tracks for the running of our spirituality train. The *Gita's* paragon is the self-actualized individual, who has metamorphosed into a receiver, relisher and radiators of love (12.13). At the end of a productive and fulfilling life, such a spiritual activist relishes the ultimate treat in the *Gita's* self-help menu: eternal love in the world of love with the Lord of love (8.5).



Can any self-help book offer anything even remotely comparable?

