



Bhagavad Gita: A New Translation

By Stephen Mitchell

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Stephen Mitchell is widely known for his ability to make ancient masterpieces thrillingly new, to step in where many have tried before and create versions that are definitive for our time. His celebrated version of the Tao Te Ching is the most popular edition in print, and his translations of Jesus, Rilke, Genesis, and Job have won the hearts of readers and critics alike. Stephen Mitchell now brings to the Bhagavad Gita his gift for breathing new life into sacred texts.

The Bhagavad Gita is universally acknowledged as one of the world's literary and spiritual masterpieces. It is the core text of the Hindu tradition and has been treasured by American writers from Emerson and Thoreau to T. S. Eliot, who called it the greatest philosophical poem after the *Divine Comedy*. There have been more than two hundred English translations of the Gita, including many competent literal versions, but not one of them is a superlative literary text in its own right.

Now all that has changed. Stephen Mitchell's *Bhagavad Gita* sings with the clarity, the vigor, and the intensity of the original Sanskrit. It will, as William Arrowsmith said of Mitchell's translation of *The Sonnets to Orpheus*, "instantly make every other rendering obsolete."

From the Hardcover edition.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

On the list of the greatest spiritual books of all time, the *Bhagavad Gita* resides permanently in the top echelon. This poem of patently Indian genius sprouted an immense tree of devotional, artistic, and philosophical elaboration in the subcontinent. The scene is a battlefield with the prince Arjuna pitted against his own family, but no sooner does the poem begin than the action reverts inward. Krishna, Arjuna's avatar and spiritual guide, points the way to the supreme wisdom and perfect freedom that lie within everyone's reach. Worship and be faithful, meditate and know reality--these make up the secret of life and lead eventually to the realization that the self is the root of the world. In this titular translation, Stephen Mitchell's rhythms are faultless, making music of this ancient "Song of the Blessed One." Savor his rendition, but nibble around the edges of his introduction. In a bizarre mixture of praise and condescension, Mitchell disregards two millennia of Indian commentary, seeking illumination on the text from Daoism and Zen, with the *Gita* coming up just shy of full spiritual merit. Perhaps we should take it from Gandhi, who used the *Gita* as a handbook for life, that it nourishes on many levels. --*Brian Bruya*

From Library Journal

Mitchell must by now be accounted one of our generation's heroic translators, having taken on the Book of Job, the Tao te Ching, and Genesis and done so much to popularize Rilke in English. Now he applies his considerable skill and sympathy to one of the most noted sacred texts of Asia, the Bhagavad Gita, and the results are very happy. He works in free-verse quatrains of about three beats per line, and his language flows with great naturalness. Inevitably, this text will remain both ancient and foreign to many modern readers, but Mitchell's work goes a long way to making these words...[drive] away your ignorance and delusion. Highly recommended.

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From [Booklist](#)

Thoreau said of this Indian masterpiece that "in comparison, our modern world and its literature seem puny and trivial," while Gandhi claimed that those who meditated upon it would "derive fresh joy and new meanings from it every day." The sixth book of the epic *Mahabharata*, the *Gita* is one of Asia's most renowned spiritual texts. Mitchell, whose translation of the *Tao Te Ching* has been extraordinarily popular, offers a direct, clean translation of the *Gita* that reads like a series of pithy epigrams of advice and comfort. Some purists may find his simplification of the sometimes ornate, prayerful Sanskrit questionable, but for the average reader, Mitchell clarifies meaning without sacrificing beauty and emotional resonance: "Cut down this deep-rooted tree / with the sharp-edged ax of detachment: / then search for that primal Person / from whom the whole universe flows." Recommended for libraries whose patrons show strong interest in non-Western religious traditions. *Patricia Monaghan*

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Carlos Vickers:

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your capable a lot more increase. Book can to be your best friend when you getting pressure or having big problem together with your subject. If you can make studying a book Bhagavad Gita: A New Translation for being your habit, you can get a lot more advantages, like add your own capable, increase your knowledge about several or all subjects. You could know everything if you like open and read a reserve Bhagavad Gita: A New Translation. Kinds of book are a lot of. It means that, science guide or encyclopedia or other individuals. So , how do you think about this reserve?

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