

Choose the *Bhagavad Gita* that is Best for You

There are many, many versions of the *Bhagavad Gita* available. This guide can help you choose one.

Disclaimer:

I am biased. I wrote 3 translations of the *Bhagavad Gita*, and I think they are quite good. You may, too. I'll describe them below, as well as other versions of this classic text. While I'd love you to enjoy my books, I realize another version may speak to you more fully. It is far more important to me that you find a book that serves you than that you read mine out of any sense of obligation.

If you are newer to the *Bhagavad Gita*, Eastern philosophy and/or yoga:

Hearing the Song of Your Soul by Laura Atmadarshan Santoro. This short book contains a brief introduction and a translation in the same poetic meter as the original work, bringing its lyrical beauty to life.

Understanding the Song of Your Soul by Laura Atmadarshan Santoro. This work includes an entertaining introduction to the setting of the *Gita* plus a poetic translation of it with commentary geared toward helping you understand how an ancient text can help you in your modern life.

The Bhagavad-Gita: Krishna's Counsel in Time of War by Barbara Stoler Miller. Miller is a scholar, not a yogi, and avoids using yogic terms which might confuse the beginner. This translation without commentary is a non-intimidating introduction to the *Gita*.

The Bhagavad Gita by Eknath Easwaran. Introduces yogic concepts and the story's characters in a very accessible way.

The Bhagavad Gita: A Walkthrough for Westerners by Jack Hawley. This prose interpretation is very good at incorporating the setting and making the underlying ideas of the *Gita* comprehensible, especially for those who have no previous experience of this work.

If you have some experience with the *Bhagavad Gita*, yoga, or Sanskrit:

The Bhagavad Gita for Daily Living (3 Volumes) by Eknath Easwaran. Includes many delightful stories and examples that make the *Bhagavad Gita* much more comprehensible.

The Yoga of the Bhagavad Gita by Paramahansa Yogananda. Discusses chakra theory and kundalini in relation to the *Gita*.

Bhagavad Gita: The Song of God by Mukundananda. This work includes the original Sanskrit, word-to-word meaning, translation and commentary, plus its online version is easy to navigate.

The Bhagavad Gita by Sivananda. Used in many yoga teacher trainings, this volume includes the original Sanskrit, word-by-word translation, extra information on the *Gita* and precise use of yogic terminology.

If you are an unabashed *Gita* aficionado with more knowledge of yoga and/or Sanskrit:

Embracing the Song of Your Soul by Laura Atmadarshan Santoro. This comprehensive volume includes both a poetic and a more literal translation (both in the original Sanskrit meter) for those who want to grasp the nuances of each word more fully. A commentary on the more literal version includes an exploration of the translation process and ideas for applying the *Bhagavad Gita* to your work, life and destiny.

The Bhagavad Gita by Franklin Edgerton. First published in 1944, this book will satisfy those who like meticulous research and a strictly literal approach to translation. Detailed notes and lots of scholarly interpretation make this all but unreadable for casual students but a valuable reference for those who may wish to create their own translation someday.

The Bhagavad Gītā by Winthrop Sargeant. A highly respected work with the case, gender, etc., of every word, helpful footnotes and the Sanskrit with transliteration, direct translation and interpretation. This weighty tome is the standard for Western readers who want to scrutinize the original language of the poem.

God Talks with Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita by Paramahansa Yogananda. The author of *Autobiography of a Yogi* gives detailed, symbolic interpretations of the verses, especially through the lens of Kriya Yoga, in this two-volume set.

If you prefer a movie to books:

The Legend of Bagger Vance. Directed by Robert Redford and starring Will Smith, Matt Damon, Charlize Theron, and Jack Lemmon, this 2000 film adaptation uses golf as a metaphor for the battlefield of life.