



## Relevance of the Teachings of Bhagavad Gita during the Corona Pandemic in India (2020-2022)

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study is to examine how the Bhagavad Gita's teachings apply to the Indian Corona epidemic. The worldwide pandemic is winning a hard-fought struggle against the world. Gita could provide guidance on how to overcome obstacles and succeed. The COVID-19 epidemic has upended society all around the world, posing serious problems for people, groups, and countries. The teachings of ancient books like the Bhagavad Gita have reemerged as a source of consolation, direction, and inspiration in India, where the epidemic has had a significant impact. The application of the Bhagavad Gita's teachings to the COVID-19 outbreak in India is examined in this essay. A classic Hindu text known as the Bhagavad Gita offers significant insights on human existence, spirituality, and the nature of life's difficulties. Its teachings place a strong emphasis on the need of preserving composure, fortitude, and spiritual development in the midst of difficulty. This essay explores how the Bhagavad Gita's eternal guidance might be used to meet the particular problems posed by the epidemic.

**Index Terms:** Covid-19, pandemic, Bhagavad Gita, spirituality, human existence

### Introduction

Being one of the oldest religious texts in existence, the Bhagavad-Gita is noteworthy. It was first said in Sanskrit but has since been translated into many other languages.

Tradition, old texts, myths, and folklore all contain evidence of its long history. Through Arjuna, the holy character of Lord Krishna transmitted its lessons.

This text captures the core of Sanatana-dharma, an enduring and insightful philosophy that helps lessen suffering across the spectrum of human experience. It presents a message of life centred on the divine, including correct knowledge, faith, devotion, self-surrender, detachment, and executing chores with impartiality, in a world that is becoming more complex and uncertain. This contrasts with ego-centered life, which is characterised by constant striving, self-centered thinking, and egoism, as well as the subsequent misery brought on by unmet ambitions or attachment to undesirable consequences. The Bhagavad-Gita is a profoundly spiritual discourse that is especially important for people who are battling the struggles of everyday life. It represents in a symbolic way the incident involving Arjuna, who, while battling the demons of Kurukshetra, experienced anguish and perplexity and was helped and directed by God Himself.

Being the only book in the Vedic Shastra to be classified as both Shruti (revealed information) and Smriti (remembered knowledge), the Bhagavad-Gita occupies a special place in Vedic philosophy. It is regarded as the first and final book to achieve this status. The narration of the Bhagavad-Gita, which has 18 chapters and 700 verses, is credited to four main characters as follows: Dhritarashtra (1 verse), Sanjaya (41 verses), Arjuna (84 verses), and Lord Krishna (574 verses).

**About the Author**

The mythological sage Vyasa, who is also credited with compiling the epic Mahabharata, is generally credited with authoring the work. The division of the Vedas by Vyasa, also known as Vedavyasa, gave him the title "Veda." In the majority of Hindu faiths, he is regarded as a knowledgeable sage.

Krishna Dwaipayana, Vyasa's given name, means "dark skin tone" in Sanskrit, and "Island" alludes to the location of his birth. The Brahma Sutras' author is also referred to as Badrayana. Numerous Hindus think of Vyasa as an incomplete manifestation (a-avatara) of the Hindu divinity Vishnu. The Brahma Sutras, the four Vedas, the four collections of Vedic mantras, and the 18 Puranas are all credited to him. He is thought to be one of the seven immortals (Chiranjeevis), believed to be alive in the world today.

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**Righteousness**

Verse in Sanskrit –

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिः भवति भारत अभ्युत्थानम् अधर्मस्य तदा आत्मानं सृजामि अहम् ॥ ४-७ ॥

परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् । धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय सम्भवामि युगे युगे ॥ ४-८ ॥

□ Verse in English - yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānirbhavati bhārata

abhyutthānamadharmasya tadātmānaṃ sṛjāmyaham paritrāṇāya sādḥūnāṃ vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām dharmasamsthāpanārthāya sambhavāmi yuge yuge

□ Explanation in English – In times when righteousness declines and unrighteousness prevails, I, O Bharata, manifest myself. My purpose is to protect the virtuous, annihilate the wicked, and establish righteousness. Therefore, in every era, I am born.

□ Relevance of Pandemic - According to the sloka, if something happens on Earth that is utterly wrong and beyond human control, God will take birth on Earth to make it right.

We have seen how the COVID-19 epidemic has upended social norms, caused fatalities, and caused hardships for both people and communities. It may be said that throughout this period, righteousness may have waned in certain areas, such as compassion, unity, and moral behaviour, while self-interest, fear, and worry increased.

This poem serves as a reminder that heavenly intervention or higher direction can materialise in times of adversity to restore justice and combat the prevailing irreligion. It promotes people to think back on their deeds, decisions, and the status of society at large.

This passage guarantees that the divine presence is ever-present, restoring justice and establishing moral principles. By encouraging honesty, compassion, and justice in both individual and group endeavors, they offer hope and inspire people to work towards the restoration of a just society. It has also been equally represented in Kum Kum Ray's poem 'The Ganges Flow On' (2018).

As individuals banded together to help one another throughout the epidemic, these virtues were brought to light. It has caused people to reassess their priorities, strengthen their spiritual links, and go to their faith for comfort and support.

### Discipline

□ Verse in Sanskrit –

क्लैब्यं मा स्म गमः पार्थ नैतत्त्वय्युपपद्यते ।

क्षुद्रं हृदयदौर्धल्यं त्यक्त्वोत्तिष्ठ परन्तप ॥ २-३॥

□ Verse in English - klaibyaṃ mā sma gamaḥ pārtha naitattvayyupapadyateksudraṃ hrdayadaurbalyaṃ tyaktvottiṣṭha parantapa

□ Explanation in English - O Parth (Arjuna), it is not appropriate for you to yield to this unmanliness. Abandon such feeble-heartedness and stand up, O conqueror of enemies.

□ Relevance of Pandemic – In order to successfully navigate the path of enlightenment during the pandemic, we must learn from Geeta. Through this sloka, we can comprehend the need for high moral character as well as the need for people to adopt an upbeat, enthusiastic, and spirited outlook while overcoming worldly attitudes like laziness, prosperity for freedom, ignorance, and attachment. Being a skilled teacher, Shri Krishna corrects Arjuna while boosting his self-esteem by telling him to deal with the situation. By maintaining a strong inner sense of positivity, you can counteract the bad forces surrounding you. The similar concept goes in the following lines penned down by Kum Kum Ray in her poem 'Second Wave 2021', (Shades of Resilience,2022)

Riding a bicycle, to keep the balance ,you've got to keep moving.

Fast track, fast food, fast life ,fast transactions, fast cards, fast tracks

Gave way to back seat management.

### SELF-CONTROL

□ Verse in Sanskrit – ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः ।

□ मनःषष्ठानीन्द्रियाणि प्रकृतिस्थानि कर्षति ॥ १५-७॥

□ Verse in English – mamaivāṃśo jīvaloke jīvabhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ

manaḥṣaṣṭhānīndriyāṇi prakṛtisthāni karṣati

□ Explanation in English – A timeless fragment of Myself, taking on a living form in the realm of existence, resides within nature. It attracts the five senses, along with the mind as the sixth.

□ Relevance of Pandemic - This line might be seen as describing the energetic and restless character of human ties and wants in the setting of the epidemic. People frequently go through a variety of emotional and psychological responses when confronted with a crisis like COVID-19. It is possible to interpret fear, worry, and the need to feel in control of one's life as expressions of wants and attachments. This passage serves as a reminder that these intense impulses and attachments might result in wanting, looking for

outside fulfilment, and making rash actions. This might take the form of panic shopping, stockpiling necessities, or disobeying safety precautions during a pandemic to satisfy individual needs or ease worry. Our ongoing interference with the natural order of the universe by breaching somekey rules, such as Newton's third law of motion, which asserts that every action hasan equal and opposite response, is the root cause of the whole epidemic.

In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna claimed that all living things, including animals, aquatic life, plants, insects, and humans, are a part of him forever. Therefore, we ought to use the superior wisdom that God has given us instead ofkilling our animal relatives in order to appease our tongues. Instead, we ought to take on a more responsible position as protectors rather than hunters. We should cooperate rather than exercise control.

It is imperative that the entire human species gets its act together, that we take responsibility for our actions going forward, and that we learn from these experiences. Stop eating meat, that is.

The passage exhorts people to build a more rational and balanced attitude by encouraging them to recognize how these impulses and attachments affect their behaviour. We may make thoughtful judgements that put the needs of others and ourselves first by being aware of our desires and attachments without letting themrule us.

### Focus and Equanimity

□ Verse in Sanskrit - इन्द्रियार्थेषु वैराग्यम् अनहङ्कारः एव च

जन्ममृत्युजराव्याधिदुःखदोषानुदर्शनम् ॥ १३-९॥

□ Verse in English - indriyārthesu vairāgyamanahānkāra eva ca

janmamṛtyujarāvvyādhiduḥkhadoṣānudarśanam

□ Explanation in English - It refers to remaining \_detached from sensory objects and not being driven by egoism. It involves recognizing and reflecting upon the inherentsuffering in the cycle of birth, death, old age, sickness, and pain.

□ Relevance of Pandemic – People have experienced a variety of challenges throughout the Covid-19 epidemic, including health issues, loved one loss, financial troubles, and general unpredictability. This verse serves as a gentle reminder to shift our attention away from the fleeting and always changing natureof the material world and onto the more profound facets of who we are. It inspires us to go within in order to find the tranquilly and wisdom that may provide us comfort and fortitude in trying circumstances.

The stanza emphasises the value of preserving composure and distance. It is normalto feel dread, uncertainty, and other emotions in the face of a pandemic. The lessonerves as a reminder to develop inner resilience, handle difficulties with a balancedperspective, and find calm in the midst of chaos. As Kum Kum Ray writes in her poem- ‘Death –The Living Truth’ ( Shades of Resilience, 2022):

‘WE ARE CREATURES OF A DAY’,

Riddled with death to learn how to live.

‘Trivialize the trivia’,

If death is a trivial interlude,

For a change of the “grab” as the Hindu sages say,

“Then why the lament?”...

### Service, Duty and Compassion

Verse in Sanskrit - कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन । मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते संगोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥ २-४७ ॥

□ Verse in English - karmanyevādhikāraṣṭe mā phaleṣu kadācana

mā karmaphalaheturbhūrmā te saṅgo'stvakarmani

□ Explanation in English – Your duty is to engage in action, but you should not seek the fruits of those actions. Do not let the desire for the outcomes of your actions be your motivation, nor should you become attached to inaction.

□ Relevance of Pandemic – This passage exhorts people to put their attention on their obligations rather than only being concerned with the results. Being unduly devoted to the outcome or worrying excessively during the epidemic will prevent us from following instructions, taking the required measures, and assisting others as best we can, like physicians treating patients in hospitals.

The lyric expresses a warning about being attached to inactivity. During a pandemic, it's crucial to keep safe and take the appropriate measures, but it's also crucial to avoid losing control out of fear or despair. Even in the midst of trying circumstances, the teaching implores us to act responsibly, adapt to new conditions, and contribute productively to the best of our ability.

We may handle the epidemic with a more balanced viewpoint, focused on our obligations, and with a diminished connection to the uncontrolled components of the circumstance by considering and putting these Bhagavad Gita lessons into practice. It can assist us in maintaining our mental and emotional health while also directing us to take the required precautions and actively participate in society.

### Conclusion

The Bhagavad Gita provides significant knowledge and direction that may be relevant and applicable to a variety of facets of life, including the difficulties brought on by the COVID-19 epidemic. The Bhagavad Gita places a strong emphasis on key ideas that may support people in overcoming challenges and providing comfort, support, and direction.

The Bhagavad Gita passages that we looked at give insight on a variety of COVID-19 pandemic-related topics. They serve as a reminder of the need of sustaining justice, compassion, and ethical principles amid trying circumstances. They exhort us to develop virtues and attitudes like fortitude, selflessness, and oneness. The Gita also exhorts us to move beyond the fleeting and material components of life and establish a connection with the eternal and spiritual aspects of ourselves, giving us a larger outlook and a sense of direction even in the face of hardship.

The lyrics urge us to rise above difficulties and take decisive action to deal with them rather than giving in to weakness or helplessness. They encourage us to take stock of our deeds, attitudes, and the results of our decisions on a personal and societal level. Additionally, they exhort us to seek inner fortitude, serenity, and a greater comprehension of the eternal aspects of life, which may offer consolation and direction in trying circumstances.

The COVID-19 epidemic may not be specifically addressed in the Bhagavad Gita, but its lessons nonetheless have much to teach us about how to live wisely, resolutely, and compassionately in these trying times. Even in the midst of a planetary catastrophe like COVID-19, people may discover inner fortitude, contribute positively to society, and work towards establishing a more peaceful and compassionate world by adhering to the ideals and teachings of the Bhagavad Gita.

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