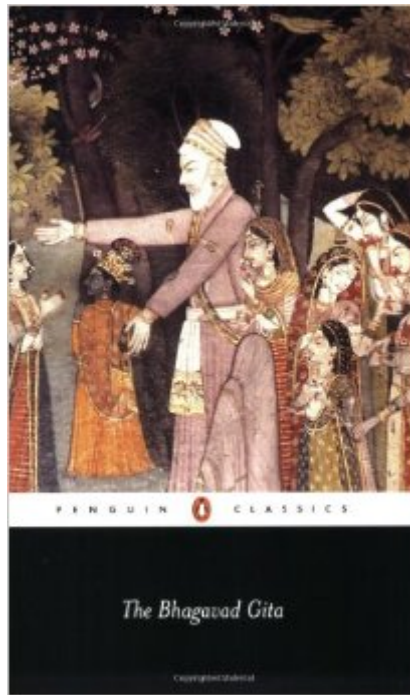


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The Bhagavad Gita (Penguin Classics)



Synopsis

The eighteen chapters of The Bhagavad Gita (c. 500 b.c.), the glory of Sanskrit literature, encompass the whole spiritual struggle of a human soul. Its three central themes— "love, light, and life"—arise from the symphonic vision of God in all things and of all things in God. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

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Customer Reviews

Juan Mascaro's edition of the Gita is undoubtedly one of the more attractive versions for the general reader who is approaching the Gita for the first time. Mascaro, besides being a Sanskrit scholar, is a sensitive translator who clearly resonates to the Gita. He tells us that the aim of his translation is "to give, without notes or commentary, the spiritual message of the Bhagavad Gita in pure English." To suggest just how well he has succeeded, here is his rendering of Verse II.66: "There is no wisdom for a man without harmony, and without harmony there is no contemplation. Without contemplation there cannot be peace, and without peace can there be joy?" Many readers will probably be content to remain with Mascaro, and it certainly seems to me that his translation reads beautifully and that a

fair number of his verses have never been bettered by others. But the Gita is not quite so simple as it may sometimes appear. If we want to arrive at a fuller idea of just what the Gita means by "wisdom," "harmony," "contemplation," "peace," and so on, we will need to consult other and fuller editions. There are many editions which, besides giving a translation of the Gita, also give a full commentary such as the excellent one by Sri Aurobindo in his 'Bhagavad Gita and Its Message' (1995). Others, besides giving a commentary and notes, also give the Sanskrit text along with a word-by-word translation. Some of these even include the commentary of the great Indian philosopher, Shankara (c. + 788 to 820), such as the very fine edition by Swami Gambhirananda (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1995, which may be available through the Vedanta Press, CA). Here is the latter's English rendering of Verse II.

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