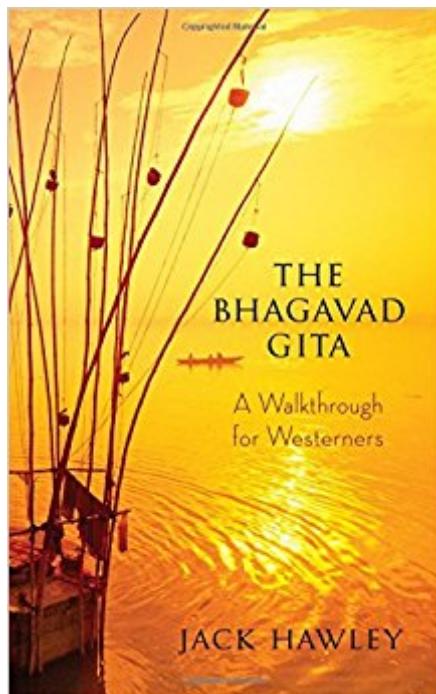


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The Bhagavad Gita: A Walkthrough For Westerners



Synopsis

The Bhagavad Gita has been called India's greatest contribution to the world. For more than five thousand years, this great scripture has shown millions in the East how to fill their lives with serenity and love. In these pages, Jack Hawley brings these ancient secrets to Western seekers in a beautiful prose version that makes the story of the Gita clear and exciting, and makes its truths understandable and easy to apply to our busy lives. The Gita is a universal love song sung by God to His friend man. It can't be confined by any creed. It is a statement of the truths at the core of what we all already believe, only it makes those truths clearer, so they become immediately useful in our daily lives. These truths are for our hearts, not just our heads. The Gita is more than just a book, more than mere words or concepts. There is an accumulated potency in it. To read the Gita is to be inspired in the true sense of the term: to be "in-spirited," to inhale the ancient and ever-new breath of spiritual energy.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Have you heard of the Bhagavad Gita, but that's the extent of your knowledge about it? Are you interested in reading this ancient text but are less than confident in your ability to understand it? Are you not exactly a religious or ancient history scholar? Are you more comfortable with reading paragraphs of prose than stanzas of poetry? Have you read or tried to read the Gita before but aren't quite sure you "got it"? Then this may be the Gita for you! Jack Hawley's "A Walkthrough for Westerners" is the version used in my beginners' "Intro to the Bhagavad Gita and Tao Te Ching" class. The instructor has read many versions of the Gita and figures we semi-clueless westerners

are most likely to understand this version. :-)
This version reads like a novel/sermon. If you can read the newspaper, you can successfully read and understand this version of the Gita. Helpful features for beginners include:^{*} A discussion of why to read the Gita - The nutshell version is that the Gita is full of advice for living--timeless advice and wisdom that is as relevant to 21st century westerners as it was to ancient warriors. And besides, we all have inner warriors.^{*} Advice on how to read it - Hawley tells us to be receptive, to not immediately dismiss things we read, to not take things literally, to apply the advice to our own inner battles, and to not get wrapped in issues such as whether war is justified. His discussion is worth reading, no matter which version of the Gita we select.^{*} Setting up the story - Hawley doesn't just launch into the Gita without explanation. He tells us, "The year is 3141 B.C.E. Arjuna, an esteemed warrior-prince at the height of his powers...is readying to go into battle.

It took me fifty years to recognize the deficiencies of the command and control or top down elite-dominated model of governance, and to discover the spiritual and practical integrity of collective intelligence, openness, appreciative inquiry, deliberative public dialog, and so on. It's taken another seven years to discover detachment from outcome, and that in turn set the stage for what I find to be the absolute essence of this book: speaking truth to power is half the battle, losing the anger is the other half. Harder to do than it sounds, this Westernized version of the Bhagavad Gita does help. Here are the two paragraphs I pulled from page 129 and then 147 for intelligence (decision-support) professionals: "Those who transcend the gunas are in essence watchers, beyond the worldly. Although constantly aware of the inevitable cycle of birth, disease, senility, grief, and so forth, they dwell above it all, and merely witness it. My personal take on the above is that sacred dispassion is a prerequisite for both spiritual vision and professional integrity." Always tell the truth, Arjuna, and present it in as pleasant a way as possible. If you cannot do that, remain silent. If something absolutely needs to be said, you must uphold the truth, but find a way to do it that is gentle and obliging." Talk about one's life flashing past--A for truth, F for gentle. Something to work on in my last 20 years. The book was recommended to me by Harrison Owen, most recently author of

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