

## The Bhagavad Gita on Spiritualism, Spiritual Healing, and Channels

Our current, best films and novels keep repeating the age-old story of good versus evil. It's certainly nothing new but it keeps engaging our attention. How can we just get to the bottom of it, get out of the muck, and stop this endless retelling of the same old battle?

*The Bhagavad Gita with Commentary by Paramahansa Yogananda* is one guide out. It's not a quick read; it's about 1200 pages long. It is said that the Rishis (awakened spiritual sages of India) wrote the original text about 3,000 years ago. In it God talks to a man, Arjuna, who is aspiring to become awakened and struggling with forces, habits of mind, and conditioning that oppose his efforts. Yes, it is the same old story of Good versus Evil—but this time, it's told to us by God-realized souls dedicated to assisting those who want liberation.

It's not Hollywood. It's not mythology or a fairy tale. This time it's pure guidance for those who truly want to get out of the struggle and become enlightened--ASAP.

In order for this book to make any sense at all, one must believe in reincarnation, karma (cause and effect), and the human potential for *super*-consciousness (to be in direct and sustained communion with the Creator) and then *cosmic*-consciousness. One must also accept that we have a life when each unique person's spirit is no longer in the body—but goes to an astral realm—where it continues to be on the path of awakening, carrying over to that place the level of consciousness he or she reached in physical life.

It's similar to grade school through graduate school with more steps and less books: Those who keep at it progress from sub-conscious to conscious to super-conscious. Each one of us goes up through the grades: in the body, then out of the body, back in the body, then out of the body, etc. until we reach super-consciousness, aka full enlightenment.

So, just reading the Bhagavad Gita requires prior study and having deeply understood some elementary ideas.

### Enter Spiritualism, Spiritual Healing and Channels

In progressing through 'the grades', many become fascinated by the realm where the disembodied spirits live. Questions arise: "What's it like over there? Can we still phone home? Can we still converse with our loved ones after death? Can my "dead" Uncle Alfie tell me where the buried family treasure is? Can the spirits guide us to make more money in the stock market...or in making the right choice for a marriage partner?"

Fascinating stuff! It stirs the pot...all sorts of ghosts and greedy goblins come out of the dark to say “BOO!” The *sub*-conscious mind has a field day.

Beware! says the Gita. This is treacherous territory for those who want the shortest route to enlightenment:

*“... those who believe in consulting “departed spirits” are ignorant men. Such persons rely on the guidance of astral entities instead of seeking communion with God, the Heavenly Father and Friend of all. Having His help, what need of aid from astral beings?”-- Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 17, Verse 4, p 990-991*

Let’s keep in mind that this is advice for the “advanced student” who is looking for the highest teachings. The Rishi’s advise that going directly to God in communion is better than seeking the guidance of astral entities who are not as evolved.

*...“Liberated souls do not usually dwell in the astral worlds, which are reserved for beings who have more or less recently left the earth and who have many lessons yet to learn. Great masters are unconfined, at home in Omnipresence; though some of them may appear, as Saviors, in the astral ...Great gurus...do not require an agent or “medium” to reach the truth-seeker who wants and needs their aid; they assist their disciples directly.”— Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 17, Verse 4, p 990-991*

This tells us that mediums who channel spirits may sound eloquent—but are not presenting us with *the highest* truths. Those truths can only come from an awakened one—and *such a being does not utilize mediums or channels*.

Simply put, some mediums and channels can be of service as vehicles of less enlightened beings. This can be a source of healing, but not one is able to channel the *highest* truth.

Let the buyer be aware, then—it’s dangerous territory to consult a channel or a medium no matter WHO that medium says he represents. Calling yourself a channel of an enlightened being is heady stuff...can place you in a position of power and influence in some people’s lives...can even bring you great wealth if you charge for your services.

Similarly with spiritual healers. Are they truly channeling the light of an awakened master...To put it another way, would an awakened master choose this person to be a vehicle of his/her wisdom and energy? No. The fully-awakened master, as the Gita says, goes directly to the awakening intuition of the disciple without using a medium of any sort.

It behooves each one of us to determine, then, what the qualities of an awakened master are...and then compare those qualities to the person we choose to follow as a teacher. Many will agree, an awakened master must consistently demonstrate the qualities of being omnipresent, omniscient and radiating an unconditional love for all humankind. Examples are Rama Krishna, Jesus Christ and Yogananda

## **Fellowship and Connection**

This does not mean we must isolate ourselves and never seek the companionship of others on the path. We need fellowship. Conversation and discussion can be enriching and liberating and adds levity. Yes, there is a place for laughter, song, and dance!...as well as sharing our own wisdom with others.

We can acknowledge the gifts that come with mediumship and channeling. A dear friend wrote me:

*“Just as the childish, immature character known as Mozart could channel heavenly music from a place within that wasn’t that childish personality, but touched on divinity, perhaps verbal expressions of Truth are also available to us ordinary people when we get out of the way with our personalities. A few people seem to have a plethora of such a getting-out-of-the-way talent. Pat Rodegast channeled Emmanuel, and a finer teaching I have never encountered. Helen Shucman channeled A Course in Miracles, whose expression of Spirit is superb, subtle, deep, and perhaps a better representation of what Jesus may have really taught than the thrice-removed, probably mistranslated, mixed-quality material attributed to him in the Christian Bible... I would like to suggest that the highest truth is always present to the Self, the Universal Loving Wisdom within all children of God. Admittedly it is hidden from our awareness most of the time by layers of fear and delusion.”*

I’ve personally been involved with lively, spiritual communities that are focused on one or more compelling, charismatic spiritual healers. There’s a “high” that comes with being part of the group, eating, praying and meditating together. Some find the high and the phenomena so compelling, they keep coming back for more, just like addicts do with drugs. But, what is the gift and what is the cost?

By my reading, the Gita is saying: If you are motivated to get to enlightenment as fast as possible-- don’t “consult” the medium, channel or spiritual healer—IF you are interested in enlightenment, go directly to God.

There is much to learn from taking the long way up the mountain, through the jungles and into the clearings...Spiritual communities surrounding channels, mediums and spiritualists can be interesting teachers. However, it is also possible

to use a more direct path to Self-Realization and one guide to that path lies within the pages of the Gita.

The good news:

*“...When a devotee by self-effort uplifts his consciousness in meditation to the pure realms of the saints and angels, he himself will perceive through divine sight or wondrous intuitions the presence and guidance of the holy ones who are his spiritual benefactors, and the loving God who empowers them to dispense His grace.” Bhagavad Gita, p. 992*

We are not alone. The enlightened ones and God are there whenever we call out to them. It is up to us to open to that and open, and open again, reinforcing that reality. Our job is to attune ourselves to them.

## **Problems of the Healer or Channel**

When someone who identifies himself as a healer or channel becomes engrossed with his connection with spirits in the astral realms—it can be very challenging for him to pull away and stay on track on the path to full communion with God. The phenomena of the spirit realm can be very exciting! My aunt participated in a séance once in the 1940’s, trying to get news about loved ones who might have died in WWII. While asking the spirits if their husbands were still alive, she and her friends watched a table walk upstairs without being carried or lifted—it’s hard not to get pulled in by such unusual mind-over-matter phenomena!

However, when you get pulled into this world of phenomena, you may, as the Gita says, *“fail to make any spiritual progress toward the only desirable goal: inner illumination, salvation...(these people) carelessly risk the enslavement of their God-given instruments of salvation: consciousness and will.”*

That’s a hefty price to pay.

Another problem: those that become blank enough to allow another astral being to occupy them (like channels do), may also allow other astral beings to enter who are quite ignorant. *“Such possession deranges the sub-conscious mind,”* says the Gita. This can lead to madness.

The Gita warns, *“No one should try to enter the world of physically disembodied spirits until he (or she) is first armed with the spiritual power to control that world. Such power comes only from communion with the Lord.”*

Only the most well-trained and highly-evolved mediums can enter that world of the spirits and stay balanced, with their main focus on God. This is why

Brazilian Spiritist mediums work only in groups, with a supervisor who monitors to see if anyone is becoming unbalanced and needs help (or time out). It is also the reason for their often-repeated prayer to God to watch over them in their work.

## **Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God**

Cast aside all other thoughts, try to reach the highest source of wisdom and love. This will protect you from the pull of the lower astral realms and simultaneously boost you towards illumination.

Practice the presence of God. Be in that experience. That is the way.

Want to converse with your loved one who has passed away? Allow that to come to you in your meditation, through your own intuition.

India developed scientific techniques for God-communion. Practice these...raise your mind to the Christ Center. In the *super-conscious* state one can meet true saints and masters and when *you* see them, *you* will know, *by your own intuition*, that they are great souls.

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### **Recommended Reading:**

*God Talks with Arjuna: the Bhagavad Gita with commentary by Paramahansa Yogananda, Royal Science of God Realization*—all 1200 pages.

(Please be aware that there are many commentaries written on the Bhagavad Gita. I recommend this particular one, published in 1995, as the author is very well suited to fully understand the Bhagavad Gita as he himself trained with Rishis in India. Most others who have written commentaries do not have this background.)

*The Yoga of the Bhagavad Gita: An Introduction to India's Universal Science of God-Realization by Paramahansa Yogananda*---172 pages

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**Emma Bragdon, PhD** wrote this article after her study of the Bhagavad Gita with two dear friends from the Self-Realization Fellowship, Steven Brena, MD and Martha Rosenthal. The SRF organization follows the teachings of Paramahansa Yogananda, an enlightened master who lived in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in India and the USA. [EmmaBragdon.com](http://EmmaBragdon.com)

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