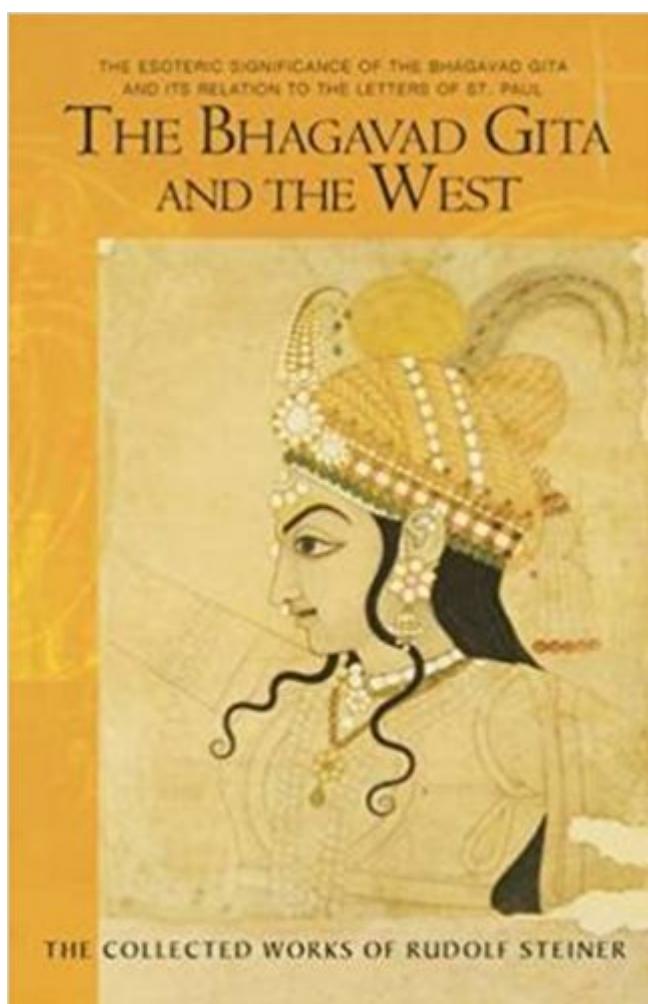


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The Bhagavad Gita And The West: The Esoteric Significance Of The Bhagavad Gita And Its Relation To The Epistles Of Paul



Synopsis

5 lectures, Cologne, Dec. 28, 1912 - Jan. 1, 1913 (CW 142) 9 lectures, Helsinki, May 28 - June 5, 1913 (CW 146) 1 lecture, Basel, Sept. 19, 1912 (CW 139)

This combination of two volumes in Rudolf Steiner's Collected Works presents Steiner's profound engagement with Hindu thought and, above all, the Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita as they illuminate Western Christian esotericism. In his masterly introduction, Robert McDermott, a longtime student of Rudolf Steiner, as well as Hindu spirituality, explores the complex ways in which the "Song of the Lord," or Bhagavad Gita, has been understood in East and West. He shows how Krishna's revelation to Arjuna—a foundation of spirituality in India for more than two and a half millennia—assumed a similarly critical role in the Western spiritual revival of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the West, for instance, leading up to Steiner's engagement, he describes the different approaches manifested by Emerson, Thoreau, H.P. Blavatsky, and William James. In the East, he engages with the interpretation of historical figures such as Mahatma Gandhi and Sri Aurobindo, relating them to Steiner's unique perspective. At the same time, and most valuable, he illuminates the various technical terms and assumptions implicit in the worldview expressed in the Bhagavad Gita. The main body of *The Bhagavad Gita and the West* consists of two lecture courses by Rudolf Steiner: "The Bhagavad Gita and the Epistles of Paul" and "The Esoteric Significance of the Bhagavad Gita." In the first course, his main purpose, as McDermott shows, is to integrate the flower of Hindu spirituality into his view of the evolution of consciousness and the pivotal role played in it by the Mystery of Golgotha—the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Steiner views Krishna as a great spiritual teacher and the Bhagavad Gita as a preparation, though still abstract, for the coming of Christ and the Christ impulse as the living embodiment of the World, Law, and Devotion, represented by the three Hindu streams of Veda, Sankhya, and Yoga. For him, the epic poem of the Bhagavad Gita represents the "fully ripened fruit" of Hinduism, whereas Paul is related but represents "the seed of something entirely new." In the last lecture, Steiner reveals Krishna as the sister soul of Adam, incarnated as Jesus, and claims Krishna's Yoga teachings streamed from Christ into Paul. In the second lecture course, given five months later, Steiner engages the text of the Bhagavad Gita on its own terms, as signaling the beginning of a new soul consciousness. To aid in the understanding of both these important cycles, this volume includes the complete text of the Bhagavad Gita in Eknath Easwaran's luminous translation. In our age, when East and West are growing closer together and we live increasingly in a global, intercultural, religiously pluralistic world, *The Bhagavad Gita and the West* is necessary reading for all concerned with a truly spiritual approach to the new reality. This book is a translation of two volumes in German: *Die Bhagavad*

Gita und die Paulusbriefe (CW 142) and Die okkulten Grundlagen der Bhagavad Gita (CW 146), published by Rudolf Steiner Verlag, Dornach, Switzerland, 1961. The lecture in the appendix is translated from Das Markus-Evangelium (CW 139) and was published in The Gospel of St. Mark, Anthroposophic Press, 1986. Part I: "The Bhagavad Gita and the Epistles of Paul" was translated by Lisa D. Monges and Doris M. Bugbey. Part II: "The Esoteric Meaning of the Bhagavad Gita" was translated by George and Mary Adams and amended by Doris M. Bugbey. Both translations were revised for this edition by Mado Spiegler. The lecture in the Appendix was translated by Conrad Mainzer and edited by Stewart C. Easton. Part III: The text of the Bhagavad Gita, translated by Eknath Easwaran, is reproduced with kind permission from Nilgiri Press, Berkeley, CA, 2007. Click here to read the first part of Robert McDermott's introduction to The Bhagavad Gita and the West.

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Customer Reviews

Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925) was born in the small village of Kraljevec, Austro-Hungarian Empire (now in Croatia), where he grew up. As a young man, he lived in Weimar and Berlin, where he became a well-published scientific, literary, and philosophical scholar, known especially for his work with Goethe's scientific writings. At the beginning of the twentieth century, he began to develop his early philosophical principles into an approach to systematic research into psychological and spiritual phenomena. Formally beginning his spiritual teaching career under the auspices of the Theosophical Society, Steiner came to use the term Anthroposophy (and spiritual science) for his philosophy, spiritual research, and findings. The influence of Steiner's multifaceted genius has

led to innovative and holistic approaches in medicine, various therapies, philosophy, religious renewal, Waldorf education, education for special needs, threefold economics, biodynamic agriculture, Goethean science, architecture, and the arts of drama, speech, and eurythmy. In 1924, Rudolf Steiner founded the General Anthroposophical Society, which today has branches throughout the world. He died in Dornach, Switzerland. Robert McDermott, Ph.D., is president emeritus and chair of the Philosophy, Cosmology, and Consciousness Program at the California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS). His publications include Radhakrishnan (1970); The Essential Aurobindo (1974, 1987); The Essential Steiner (1984); (with Rudolf Steiner) The Bhagavad Gita and the West (2009); and The New Essential Steiner (2009). He has also published on William James, Josiah Royce, M. K. Gandhi, the evolution of consciousness, and American thought. His administrative service includes president of the New York Center for Anthroposophy; president of the Rudolf Steiner [summer] Institute; chair of the board of Sunbridge College (New York) and of Rudolf Steiner College (California). He was a member of the council of the Anthroposophical Society in America (1996–2004). He is the founding chair of the board of the Sophia Project, an anthroposophic home in Oakland, California, for mothers and children at risk of homelessness. He is a Lindisfarne fellow, a Fetzer mentor, and a member of the Esalen Corporation.

Lisa Dreher Monges was the niece of Bertha Molt (wife of Emil Molt, who established the first Waldorf school) and a student at the new school in Stuttgart from its first day. She went on to study eurythmy, first in Stuttgart and then in Dornach, and she later became a eurythmy teacher in Holland and England, until Henry Monges asked her to help him translate Steiner's works. She accepted and moved to the U.S., where she became an intensive collaborator in translation, the Anthroposophical Society, and the Anthroposophic Press. They married and bought land near the Threefold Farm in Spring Valley. In 1972, Lisa Monges (with Marianne Schneider and Kari van Oordt) founded the Spring Valley Eurythmy School, where she taught and performed.

George Adams (1894-1963) was born in Poland and received an honors degree in Chemistry from Cambridge University. He was a close student of Rudolf Steiner, and translated many of his lectures given to English-speaking audiences. Being a Jew, when Hitler rose to power he changed his name from Kaufmann to Adams and left Germany for England, where he continued his anthroposophic activities and scientific research. In 1935, Olive Whicher joined Adams in London and worked with him in research into mathematics and physics until his death in 1963. He translated and published numerous books, lectures, and articles.

Mary Stewart Adams combines a degree in English Literature with more than twenty years of researching star wisdom to write, teach, and lecture about the night sky. In the early 1990s, and after a decade of independent research, Mary's encounter with astrophysicist Hazel Straker led

her to an awakened understanding of the relationship between Anthroposophy, the star wisdom called astrosophy, and the archetypal stories of humanity, written both in the greatest literature of the ages and in the script of the starry cosmos overhead. Mary teaches at her local community college in Northern Michigan and through the teacher training program in southeast Michigan. She has written locally, nationally and internationally. For more information on related products and programs, visit www.fairytalemoons.com.

The author is a seer and explains, in these compiled lectures, how Krishna is connected to Paul of the epistles in the Bible and to Adam in Christianity. It requires a belief in karma and reincarnation and that man is a spiritual being. There is an excellent introduction to the material which I would suggest be read after the book. There is a summary of each of the lectures which are helpful in case you didn't grasp something. This is somewhat esoteric so some readers may have a hard time with it if they are for the first time venturing out into Steiner or into nontraditional religious literature.

Steiner is superb, as always. This book is a gem. The only gripe is the editor(s) are somewhat careless with presenting words associated with sacred spiritual writings (I.e., Scripture). Krishna's "Self" is sometimes referred to and spelled with a small s. Attaining Self consciousness - not self consciousness - with Krishna's guidance is what the Gita is all about.

This book is interesting in the sense that it shows the relation between Hinduism and Christianity. It explains how the Bhagavad Gita is a written reflection of wisdom that allowed the ancient Hindus, who were already losing their clairvoyance, to connect with the will of the gods. Steiner speaks of the Vedic scriptures as having matured and evolved over time in such a manner as to allow the human soul to develop and maintain a connection with the divine. He compares them to the works of the apostle Paul, which express the beginnings of Christian impulses still in their infancy. Steiner uses the metaphor of Christianity being like a seed which has fallen from a fully mature plant, but a seed which contains within itself the future expression of the relationship between God and humanity.

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