GUIDE · HINDUISM

# A guide for people of the Hindu tradition.

Hindu texts hold many of these ideas in their own terms: karma as action and its results, karma yoga as acting for duty without clinging to reward, dana as giving, seva as service, and the old teaching that a guest, even a stranger, is to be honored. The Bhagavad Gita praises a gift made to someone who cannot repay it. Schools differ on who or what weighs deeds (Ishvara, the law of karma itself, or the self), and Hinduism does not usually describe life as a single test; many streams see it as a long course of learning across births.



## In your own tradition

> “Find full reward Of doing right in right! Let right deeds be Thy motive, not the fruit which comes from them.”
>
> BHAGAVAD GITA 2.47 (ARNOLD, CHAPTER II) · EDWIN ARNOLD, THE SONG CELESTIAL, 1885 (PUBLIC DOMAIN) · READ IT IN CONTEXT

> “Being of equal grace to comrades, friends, Chance-comers, strangers, lovers, enemies, Aliens and kinsmen; loving all alike, Evil or good.”
>
> BHAGAVAD GITA 6.9 (ARNOLD, CHAPTER VI) · EDWIN ARNOLD, THE SONG CELESTIAL, 1885 (PUBLIC DOMAIN) · READ IT IN CONTEXT

> “Who hateth nought Of all which lives, living himself benign, Compassionate, from arrogance exempt, Exempt from love of self, unchangeable By good or ill; patient, contented, firm”
>
> BHAGAVAD GITA 12.13–14 (ARNOLD, CHAPTER XII) · EDWIN ARNOLD, THE SONG CELESTIAL, 1885 (PUBLIC DOMAIN) · READ IT IN CONTEXT

> “The gift lovingly given, when one shall say "Now must I gladly give!" when he who takes Can render nothing back; made in due place, Due time, and to a meet recipient, Is gift of Sattwan, fair and profitable.”
>
> BHAGAVAD GITA 17.20 (ARNOLD, CHAPTER XVII) · EDWIN ARNOLD, THE SONG CELESTIAL, 1885 (PUBLIC DOMAIN) · READ IT IN CONTEXT

# Five things to do this week

- [ ] **Give quietly to someone who cannot repay**
  Practice dana by handing food or money to a person in need and telling no one. The Gita counts a gift that expects nothing back as the purest kind.
- [ ] **Offer one task, then release the result**
  Before one piece of work, dedicate it to God or to duty, then let go of praise or outcome. This is karma yoga as the Gita describes it.
- [ ] **Treat a stranger as an honored guest**
  Offer water, a meal, or a seat to a visitor or someone passing by, in the spirit of atithi devo bhava, the guest as divine.
- [ ] **Do one act of seva**
  Serve at a temple meal, a food bank, or a community kitchen this week, without seeking a role or credit.
- [ ] **Keep one day free of harsh words**
  Practice ahimsa in speech: for a single day, say nothing that wounds, online or off, even when no one would notice.

# Questions to bring to your own teacher

- How does my tradition ask me to act when no one will ever know and nothing will come back to me?
- In my school, who or what weighs our deeds: Ishvara, the law of karma itself, or the self within?
- How do I hold the Gita's detachment from results together with real care for the people my actions affect?

**What this guide is not claiming.** Schools such as Advaita, Vishishtadvaita, Dvaita, and the Mimamsa and Samkhya traditions read karma, God, and the purpose of life differently, and Hindu teachers differ on all of this. This guide does not claim Hinduism teaches that life is a test; it points to teachings a believer may recognize in their own terms. I am not a scholar of your tradition, and no tradition or its leaders have endorsed this site. Ask your own teachers and community what these passages mean to them.

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