



WHY THE BHAGAVAD GITA STILL SPEAKS TO ASHTANGA PRACTICE

Over time, much of modern yoga has drifted away from the ancient teachings that were once at the foundation of this mystery we call yoga.

Yet there is something that remains.

There is no denying the feeling that comes after practice. It is not simply the feeling of having moved the body or completed a sequence. There is something deeper. A sense of returning to ourselves, of becoming quieter, more present, and more connected.

This connection arrives unexpectedly, almost like a gentle reminder that the true rewards of our actions are not always the things we are seeking.

The Bhagavad Gita text explains how this deep connection is rooted in Karma Yoga, the yoga of actions. It teaches us that our actions can lead us toward freedom.

tasmād asaktaḥ satataṁ kāryaṁ karma
samācara asakto hy ācāraṁ karma
param āpnoti pūruṣaḥ

“Therefore, without being attached to the fruits of activities, one should act as a matter of duty, for by working without attachment one attains the Supreme.”

— Bhagavad Gita 3.19

The story of the Bhagavad Gita begins on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. As two armies prepare for war, the great warrior prince Arjuna asks his charioteer, Krishna, to place him between them.

Looking across the battlefield, he sees his family, teachers, and friends. Overcome with grief and doubt, he lowers his bow and refuses to fight.

It is in this moment of uncertainty that Krishna begins to teach.

The conversation that follows is not simply about war. It is about the struggles that exist within every human being and that leave us hesitant. The struggle between fear and courage, attachment and surrender, confusion and clarity.

Karma Yoga teaches us that we must take action and not stay powerless, as action is a duty. We are responsible for our actions but should not cling to the result.

We are asked to give ourselves fully to the action itself, while releasing our attachment to what may come from it. In this sense, our actions become an offering, a sacrifice, and it is only then we start to experience freedom.

Perhaps this is why the Bhagavad Gita continues to speak after thousands of years.

It does not offer us a way to escape the challenges we face. Instead, it teaches us how to meet them with greater responsibility and freedom.

In Ashtanga Yoga, Karma Yoga teaches us that the practice itself is a self-study, svādhyāya. The mat becomes a place where we begin to face our attachments, our expectations, our fears, and the stories we create around success and failure. When we show up for practice again and again, we take action. When we take action and practise without demanding a particular result, we begin to understand something deeper. When we help others and share our knowledge of yoga without expecting anything in return, it is a selfless action. When our action becomes an offering and a sacrifice, we reach the highest state.

This teaching has had a profound influence on my own practice and, perhaps even more, on the way I teach.

I have learnt to practise without needing the practice to prove anything. To enjoy each moment on the mat without constantly asking what it will bring. To teach without needing to control the result.

This is what the Bhagavad Gita continues to remind us: that freedom is not measured by how much we achieve, how deeply we enter a posture, or how far the body has progressed. It reveals itself in the simple act of doing the work. Through practice, we have the opportunity to experience this for ourselves, over and over again.

To free yourself is not to avoid challenges, but to change the way you act toward them.