

P R E F A C E

The Bhagavad Gita is one of the very few ancient texts which is not only held in high esteem as a religious source-book, but also widely recognised as having universal appeal. It has stood the test of time. Its doctrines and practical teachings seem to have perennial relevance for man's life and conduct. Thus it is modern inspite of being an ancient work, and has numerous commentaries in a never-ending series.

In this work, among the various commentators, I have chosen for special study, the interpretation of B.G. Tilak and Sri Aurobindo- the two remarkable 20th century scholars, who were also renowned patriots and freedom fighters of India. It is generally agreed that (the ideal of the Gita had a vital role in Tilak's political and social life, and in the political and spiritual life of Sri Aurobindo. Sri Aurobindo's "Essays On The Gita" is a strikingly insightful and illumined expression of the Gita's teachings, containing the seeds of his subsequently developed philosophy of Integralism.

B.G. Tilak's "Gita Rahasya" is a monumental work. Most probably he is the first commentators who analyses Gita's teachings from ethico-pragmatic viewpoint and gives much greater emphasis on Karma-Yoga than on the theory of renunciation and isolation from society. His propagation of selfless-action had a great influence on the Indian Nationalist movement.

The purpose of the present study is to make a comparison between these two commentaries. Being extremist revolutionaries, both Tilak and Sri Aurobindo were influenced by the ideals of the Gita and endeavoured to materialise those ideals though their respective points of view and interpretations are far from identical.

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