Book Review

*My Gita* by Devdutt Pattanaik Rupa Publications (2015)

*My Gita: Cultural codes in contemporary frame*

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Pattanaik’s Gita is a perfect blend of mythology and modern perspective with his thematic approach rather than particular verse. It satisfies the thirst and hunger of a modern reader who seeks mythological facts everywhere and wants to understand and apply them in current scenario. Pattnaik’s effort is successful to make the conclusions of The Gita approachable to a common reader, who is unable to get the gist of difficult Sanskrit Scriptures of The Bhagwad Gita. He makes it more clearly with simple language and diagrams. My Gita has a unique pattern so it cannot be justified as a translation of The Gita because Pattnaik presents it in his own philosophical manner.

The book opens with its aim and provides a unique perspective to select the book. It also suggests the solutions; those are mandatory to know for a contemporary person who is tolerating excruciating pain of isolation, stress, competition, suffering and leading aimless life. It is also a ray of hope for the one who seeks I and who wants to investigate SELF.

My Gita has also 18 chapters likewise The Gita but in thematic manner. Pattnaik provides a compare and contrast between the chapters of the two books as Arjun’s Despair (1) Observation (Darshan),
Summary of Analysis (Sankhya) (2) Rebirth (Atma),
Informed Action (Karma) (3) Mortal Body (Deha),
Appreciating Exchange (Gyana) (4) Body’s Immortal Resident (Dehi),

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Detached Action (Sanyasa)  (5) Cause and Consequence (Karma),

Inner Journey(Dhyana)  (6) Appropriate Conduct (Dharma),

Inner Potential (vi-gyana)  (7) Exchange (Yagna),

Rebirth or Liberation 9Askha)  (8) Introspection (Yoga),

Special Secret (raja-ghuya)  (9) Trust (Deva-Asura),

Description of divinity(visibhuti)  (10) Potential (Bhagavan)

Sight of divinity (Viswa rupa)  (11) Expanding the Mind (Brahmana)

Form of Formless (bhakti)  (12) Contracting the mind (Avatar)

Proprietorship (Kshetra)  (13) Tendencies of Matter (Guna)

Tendencies of Matter (Guna)  (14) Proprietorship (Kshetra)

Potential ( Purushottam)  (15) Measurement (Maya)

Believers (Deva-Asura)  (16) Attachment (Moha)

Diversity of devotion ( Shraddha)  (17) Liberation (Moksha)

Summary of Solution (Moksha)  (18) Union (Brahma-Nirvana).

Ultimately after 18 chapters the book concludes with a discussion: the impact of The Gita on Arjuna that connects My Gita with The Gita. I enjoyed this section very much.

A lover of mythology and philosophy can pick this work and grasp The Bhagwad Gita with a different point of view as every Hindu has an emotional attachment with The Gita. But don’t try to compare it with the original work The Bhagwad Gita because original work has no comparison as our Vedas, Puranas and mythological epics have depth and serenity. So just read the book to know some facts in modern perspective as My Gita has its own beauty but don’t take those facts seriously in accordance with the original work.