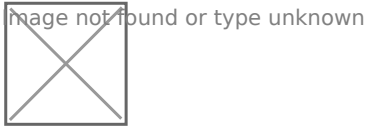


#1 Where do we Start?

Sometimes, the most difficult questions come from the simplest mouths.



On 12 June 2025, Air India Flight 171, a Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner, departed from Ahmedabad's Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport en route to London Gatwick. It stalled at around 625 ft shortly after takeoff and crashed into a building on the campus of B.J. Medical College in Ahmedabad. The plane carried 242 people (230 passengers, 12 crew); 241 aboard and at least 29 on the ground were killed, making it one of India's worst air disasters in decades.

My maid asked me, "Saab, ye aisa kyun hua - Bhagvan ne kiya kya?" (Sir, why did this happen—did God do it?).

I had no answer in the moment. But later that night, I opened the Bhagavad-gita and found a framework that made sense—not just for this tragedy, but for life itself.

Everything is contained in five factors

Krishna explains that everything in creation—every joy, every tragedy, every moment—is shaped by the interplay of five fundamental factors:

1. The human being
2. God
3. The world in which the human lives
4. The actions that humans do
5. Time

If we observe the world around us carefully, everything can be understood through these five lenses.

Let us look at a few examples:

- **Air India Crash**
 - *Human beings:* Pilots, passengers, engineers.
 - *God:* The ultimate sanctioning authority.

- *World*: The aviation system, airport infrastructure, weather conditions.
- *Actions*: Maintenance checks, pilot responses, human errors.
- *Time*: The specific moment—12 June 2025—when all factors converged.
- **A Student Passing an Exam**
 - *Human being*: The student.
 - *God*: Sanctions the result.
 - *World*: School, exam system, access to resources.
 - *Actions*: Studying, discipline, preparation.
 - *Time*: The examination date, deadlines, result declaration.
- **A Couple Getting Married**
 - *Human beings*: The bride, groom, families.
 - *God*: Brings the souls together.
 - *World*: Society, culture, location.
 - *Actions*: Mutual choice, planning, rituals.
 - *Time*: The destined moment of union.
- **A Man Missing His Train**
 - *Human being*: The commuter.
 - *God*: Permits the outcome.
 - *World*: Train schedule, traffic conditions.
 - *Actions*: Leaving late, distractions.
 - *Time*: The departure minute, missed by seconds.

If we understand these five elements clearly, we can find our place and purpose in this world. At the same time, we can scientifically understand how the whole thing works and, in the process, get answers to our questions—from the simple to the most complex.

Gita is addressing three questions

The Bhagavad-gita essentially talks about these five elements. But we can make it even simpler by translating them into three key questions:

1. Who am I?
2. Whose am I?
3. Where am I?

These are the three questions that the Gita is addressing—simple.

In a nutshell

1. Who am I? I am a spirit soul.
2. Whose am I? I am Krishna's.
3. Where am I? I am in a temporary body in a temporary material world doing actions over a period of time.

To summarize

We are eternal souls, and we are Krishna's children. We belong to the spiritual world (Vaikuntha). We chose to rebel against Krishna and entered this temporary material world. The supreme goal of life, then, is to reconnect with Krishna through yoga and return home—back to where we belong.

This is the sum and substance of all Vedic literature. This is the BIG picture. Everything else is a detail.

In the rest of the book, we will go deep into these three questions.

“The living entities in this conditioned world are My eternal fragmental parts. Due to conditioned life, they are struggling very hard with the six senses, which include the mind.”
— *Bhagavad-gita* 15.7

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