

# 7. Scripture and Selective Reading

AUTHOR Mohammed Efaz | CHANNEL  DawahWise | IDEA Hinduism |

WORDS 916 | READ TIME ~5 min

## SOURCES

 [If Hinduism is "Universal Truth", Why Did the World Reject It? · Part 1](#)

 [If Hinduism is "Universal Truth", Why Did the World Reject It? · Part 2](#)

# 7. Scripture and Selective Reading

## quick read

- Hindu scripture is vast – the Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas, epics, Dharmasastras (law texts), and thousands of commentary traditions. The problem is not scarcity. It is the lack of a stable hierarchy for deciding which text wins when two texts disagree.
- The [Gita-mahatmya 6](#) says all the Upanishads are cows and the Gita is their milk. But if the cream can override the cow, what is the cream actually made of? The hierarchy is circular.
- The [Shrimad Bhagavatam 4.25.42](#) purport by Prabhupada recommends marrying girls before puberty. The [Shrimad Bhagavatam 8.12](#) narrates Shiva chasing Vishnu's female form and ejaculating. The [Valmiki Ramayana, Ayodhya-kanda 96.1-2](#) shows Rama eating meat. [Manusmriti 5.39-42](#) treats animal sacrifice as elevating the animal. These are not polemic inventions – they are in the texts, and the interpretive method for handling them is the real test.

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The later material runs into passages that are genuinely difficult for modern Hindu apologetics. Not because the passages are hard to read – they are often quite clear. But because they are hard to reconcile with what many modern Hindus want their religion to say.

Take the [Shrimad Bhagavatam 4.25.42](#) purport by A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (the founder of ISKCON, widely respected within his tradition as a bonafide guru). The purport says: "As soon as a woman attains the age of puberty, she immediately becomes very much agitated by sexual desire. It is therefore the duty of the father to get his daughter married before she attains puberty." That is a clear statement recommending pre-puberty marriage. Prabhupada wrote it. His followers accept him as authoritative. Yet the immediate response, when this is raised, is: "That was for a different time," or "He didn't personally do that." But he wrote it in a commentary he claimed was guided by Krishna. You cannot accept a guru as divinely guided and then dismiss his inconvenient statements as products of their era.

Take the [Shrimad Bhagavatam 8.12](#) — the Mohini-murti episode. Vishnu takes the form of a naked woman (Mohini). Shiva becomes sexually aroused, chases her, and ejaculates. Verse 8.12.33 says that wherever Shiva's semen fell, mines of gold and silver appeared. Verse 8.12.35 says Shiva realised he had been "victimized by the illusion created by the Supreme Personality of Godhead." The apologia offered is that this episode demonstrates Shiva's supreme devotion — only God could captivate the mind of the greatest yogi. But the plain reading involves a god taking a naked female form to sexually arouse another god. Whether that reading is fair or not, it is the reading the text invites.

Take the [Valmiki Ramayana, Ayodhya-kanda 96.1-2](#). Rama, the ideal man of Hindu tradition, sits with Sita on a hillside "in order to gratify her appetite with a piece of flesh." He says: "This meat is fresh, this is savory and roasted in the fire." For modern vegetarian Hinduism, this is deeply uncomfortable. The response usually involves reinterpretation — "meat" might mean something else, or the context was different. But the Gita Press Gorakhpur edition (the most widely used Hindi/Sanskrit edition) translates it as meat. The Sanskrit says [mamsa](#) (flesh). [Ayodhya-kanda 52.102](#) further describes Rama and Lakshmana hunting four species of deer and eating the portions that were pure.

Take animal sacrifice. King Dasharatha, Rama's father, performed the [Ashvamedha](#) (horse sacrifice). The [Manusmṛti 5.39-40](#) says the Self-existent created animals for sacrifice, and that animals offered in sacrifice are reborn

into higher existences. The Vaishnava tradition adds that the animal is whispered to: "by this sacrifice you will immediately get a human birth." This is not a polemic invention. It is in the texts.

The pattern is the same everywhere. A troubling passage appears. One or more of these filters is applied:

1. This was for an earlier age.
2. This applies to people in **tamas** (the mode of ignorance), not the highest teaching.
3. You need a **guru** (spiritual teacher in an unbroken lineage) to interpret this correctly.
4. This school reads it differently.
5. The **Gita** overrides this, because it is the "cream of the Upanishads."

Filter five is particularly interesting. The **Gita-mahatmya 6** (a devotional text praising the Gita) says: "All the Upanishads are the cows, the milker is Krishna, Arjuna is the calf, the wise are the drinkers, the great nectar of the Gita is the milk." This is used to say the Gita clarifies and trumps ambiguous Upanishadic passages. But the Gita is supposed to be the distilled essence of those Upanishads. If the cream can override the cow, what is the cream actually made of? The hierarchy is circular: the Gita depends on the Upanishads for its authority, yet it can also overrule them.

Each person picks whichever text supports the position they already hold, and the hierarchy shifts to match. That is the deeper problem. It is not that Hindu texts contain difficult material – every religion has difficult passages. It is that Hinduism lacks a single, agreed-upon method for resolving contradictions between texts. In Islam, the Quran is primary, hadith secondary, and scholarly consensus (**ijma**) tertiary. In Christianity, creeds and councils settled major disputes. In Hinduism, you can reject one text because another text says something different, and your choice of which text to favour depends on your school, your guru, your sect, or your personal inclination. That is not a stable foundation for a universal truth claim.