

Courses

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Robert Oppenheimer

'Father Of The Atomic Bomb'

His Tryst With Gita

Why In The News?

- The Theoretical Physicist **J Robert Oppenheimer**, The Subject Of A New Movie By **Christopher Nolan**, Famously Quoted Lord Vishnu From The Bhagavad Gita After **The Trinity Test Of 1945**.
- The Test Resulted In The Creation Of The **World's First Atomic Bombs**, And Left Oppenheimer With A Lifetime Of Guilt.



Who Was J Robert Oppenheimer?

- Oppenheimer Was A First-Rate Theoretical Physicist Best Known For Having Led The **Manhattan Project**, The Top-Secret American Effort In The 1940s That Resulted In The World's First Atomic Bombs, The Ones That Were Dropped On **Hiroshima And Nagasaki**.
- He Was Genuinely Proud Of The Scientific Feat Of Making The Atomic Bomb And **Was Supportive Of Its Use On Hiroshima**, But Ferently Hoped That That Would Be The Last Time It Would Ever Be Used. In Fact, **He Became A Strong Anti-War Advocate, Just Like Einstein**.
- But Oppenheimer Was Suspected Of Being A Communist And A Soviet Spy, He Was Questioned, Humiliated And **Stripped Off His Security Clearance** In A Famous Hearing In **1954**.

- That Meant He Was Not Considered Safe To Be Made **Privy To National Secrets** And Would Lose All His Advisory Positions In Govt. In December 2022, More Than 50 Years After His Death, The **United States Formally Reversed That Decision And Restored His Security Clearance.**
- The **Institute Of Advanced Studies At The Princeton University**, However, Continued To Keep Him As Its Director, A Position He Held With Distinction **Almost Till His Death In 1967, Aged 63, Due To Throat Cancer.**

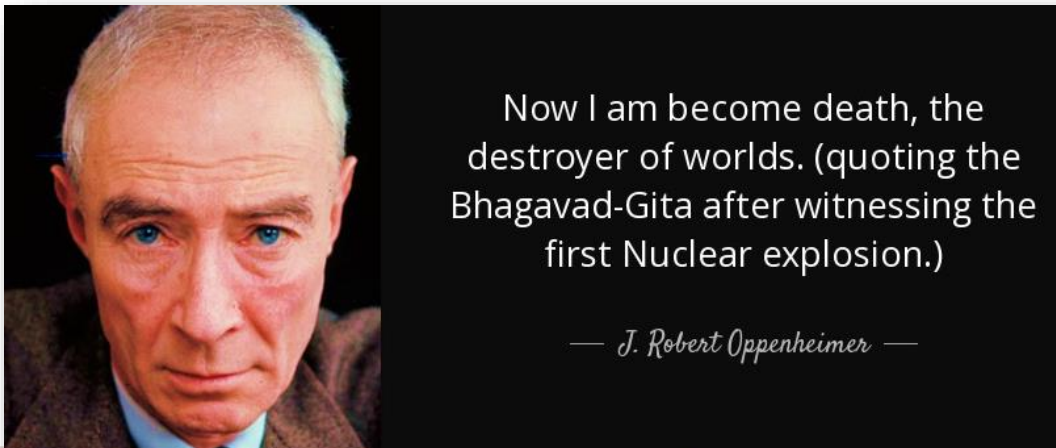


His Tryst With Gita

- Oppenheimer's Interest In Sanskrit And Hinduism Was Not Trivial. Many Other Scientists, Like **Neils Bohr, Erwin Schrodinger And Werner Heisenberg**, Have Been Inspired With The Messages In The Ancient Hindu Texts, But Oppenheimer Was Among The Few Who Actually Learnt Sanskrit, To Study These.
- The Influence Of Gita, Particularly **Its Emphasis On Karma**, Or Duty, And Detachment From The End Result, Is Seen As Having Played A Crucial Role In Oppenheimer's Leadership Of The Atomic Bomb Effort. Like Many Others, He Was Of The Opinion That The **Bomb Would Bring An End To All Wars.**
- He Was **Part Of The Committee That Selected Hiroshima As A Target**, Well After The Threat From Hitler Had Ended And Germany Surrendered. In His Later Years, He Was Repeatedly Asked Whether He Regretted Having Led The Los Alamos Laboratory, And **He Always Replied In The Negative.**
- **His Farewell Speech At The Los Alamos Laboratory** In November 1945 Brilliantly Captures The Prevailing Situation As He Saw It, The Steps That Needed To Be

Taken Towards A War-free World, And The **Role That Science And Scientists Should Play**, And Remains A Highly recommended Read.

- But **He Was Not Unshaken By The Horrors Of The War** And Remained Conflicted. He Once Remarked That **Even Krishna's Message In Gita On Detachment Wasn't Able To Comfort Him**, Probably Because He Was Not Hindu Enough.



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