



The Teachings of Gita: A Guide to Modern world of Technology

Reena Sharma

PG Department of English, Kanya Maha Vidyalaya, Jalandhar, Punjab, India

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.8977391.v1>

Article History

Received: 10/10/2018

Revised: 30/10/2018

Accepted: 14/11/2018



*Corresponding Author:

E-Mail: reenasharma1304@gmail.com

Abstract

Modern Age is an age of stress, anxiety and discontentment. There is no doubt that the modern man is far ahead of previous generations in material achievements and worldly possessions but on what a terrible price? Hasn't the modern man become restless and uneasy in quest of peace happiness, success and contentment. Today if mankind seems to be nearing catastrophe, it is because man's mind has gone astray. The mad pursuit of material goals that have little to do with peace of mind and contentment, is unfortunately a sign of happiness and success for the people of today. In the mindless pursuit of material gains, people are overcome by all kinds of emotions ranging from love to jealousy fear, hatred, selfishness, stress and discontentment.

People are in confusion and don't know what course to adopt and how to move towards better state of affairs. They are in need of an effective guide to light and true knowledge. It is in this scenario that the timeless teachings of holy Gita hold a special relevance (1). Gita demonstrates how ancient and spiritual patterns can help answer common life questions and provide meaningful purpose and direction. The highly revered Gita is actually a philosophy of life that transcends the barriers of time and religion, and it is actually a divine wisdom addressed to mankind for all times in order to help human beings face the challenges of life with grit and find solutions to the fundamental human problems (2).

In the historic conversation between Lord Krishna and Arjuna in the battlefield of Kurukshetra, Lord Krishna tells us that material existence is temporary and troublesome because of an existential disharmony: human beings tend to neglect the spiritual dimensions of their lives and

focus only on material ambitions and desires (3). When desires remain unfulfilled, it gives rise to stress, anxiety and diseases. This does not imply that Gita teaches us not to have desires but it says that one must have mastery over one's desires. It means that desire may occur but whether to go along with the flow of that desire or not should be in one's hand. One has to weigh whether the fulfilment of desire unnecessarily harms anyone. If it does, then one should have enough space within oneself to say 'no' and not yield to the pressure that is created by those desires. Gita enlightens us on how to discover that space within ourselves so that we can fulfil desires in a legitimate way without disturbing the ethical order (4).

Reading Gita has become more relevant today than it was ever before. The modern man has made innumerable achievements in diverse fields. His efforts have been directed within the realm of matter, aiming at controlling the cosmos through technology

and this results in exploitation of nature. Lord Krishna explains that just as the soul animates the body, the Supreme Being animates the entire cosmos. "One who sees Me everywhere and sees everything in Me is a man of wisdom" says Gita (1). Oneness of the universe, a doctrine propounded by Gita is the need of the hour as it can help curbing the destructive tendencies growing so immensely today. The neglect of spiritual aspect of our being has had disastrous consequences including a marked decline in human virtues. Hence, Martin Luther King, Jr's observation that "We have guided missiles and misguided men" seems so appropriate (3).

It is true that we live in an age of competition where humans are not just bothered about survival but it is a pursuit of goals at physical, emotional and intellectual level. It is a matter of fact that we as professionals face such situations many times when we are unable to take decisions because of fears or uncertainties or sometimes our decisions are biased because of attachments or prejudices. In fact in varying degrees every human is a victim of problem which Arjuna experienced in the battlefield. Lord Krishna motivated Arjuna to perform his Karma and follow the path of Dharma without getting affected by his emotions. Gita stresses on doing one's own duty sincerely and this is the lesson we all need to imbibe. "Let everywhere shine the sun of duty consciousness so that everyone's desires are fulfilled", says Gita (3). Everyone has different tendencies and capacities and accordingly his duties are differentiated. But it is ironic that we fail in recognising our duty and go on performing something else unbecoming of us. Gita's emphasis on doing one's own duty can serve as a boon to the modern world of wayward tendencies. Gita advises non attachment to the fruits of actions performed in the course of one's

duty. Dedicated work means "work for the sake work". If humans are always calculating the date of promotion for putting in efforts, then that work will never be commitment oriented and it will never give satisfaction rather it will result in inevitable disappointments and anxieties. So, Gita advises us not to mortgage the present commitment to an uncertain future. Some people may argue that being unattached to the results of one's action would make one unaccountable. But the point to understand here is that the Gita while advising 'detachment' from the greed of selfish gains by discharging one's assigned duty, does not absolve anybody of the consequences arising from the discharge of that duty. The state of "Nishkama Karma" is the right attitude propounded by Gita because it relieves the mind from dissipation through speculation on future profits or losses. In Gita, Lord Krishna classifies work ethic into two categories: 'Daivi' work culture and 'Asuri' work culture:

"Daivi work culture-means fearlessness, purity, self-control, sacrifice, straightforwardness, self-denial, calmness, absence of fault finding, absence of greed, gentleness, modesty, absence of envy and pride.

Asuri work culture-means egoism, delusion, desire centric, improper performance, work which is not oriented towards service. It is to be noted that mere work ethic is not enough as a hardened criminal has also a very good work culture. What is needed is a work ethic conditioned by ethics in work" (4).

The crux of the matter is that our pain is 'Attachment' and 'Fear'. The Gita explains in detail the concept of non-attachment to the results of one's work:

"If the result of sincere effort is success, the entire credit should not be appropriated by the doer alone. If the result of sincere effort

is failure, then too the entire blame does not accrue to the doer" (2). The former attitude modifies arrogance, the latter attitude prevents excessive despondency, lack of motivation and self pity. Thus, both these attitudes safeguard the doer against psychological vulnerability which is the cause of modern day diseases like high blood pressure, diabetes, stroke ,etc.Lord Krishna's advice; "No doer of good ever ends in misery" (3) serves as a panacea for many ailments. Every action produces results: good action produces good results and evil actions produce evil results. Therefore, one should always act well and be rewarded.

Another aspect of 'attachment' is that we are attached to our near and dear ones, and are unable to expand the circle of our actions so as to include all human beings in it. Our actions are limited to the welfare of our family and friends. Gita does not teach us to be detached from the world. In fact, physical detachment from the world is impossible as we live in an inter-connected world where actions of one affect the other. Gita shows us how to free our emotions so they flow without any distortions and encompass the whole humanity. It is a call to each one of us to get up and fight against negative emotions so that one can take decisions of life effectively. Along with taking sane decisions, management of time is a crucial factor responsible for leading a stress-free life. Management of time is a systematic way of doing all activities. The despondent position of Arjuna in the opening chapter of Gita is typical of this human situation which may come in the life of all human beings at some time or other. Lord Krishna in the Gita provides guidance about how to manage for a better time and be an effective manager. "During the curtain raiser before the Mahabharata war, Duryodhana chose Lord Krishna's large army for help while Arjuna

chose Lord Krishna's wisdom for his support. This episode gives us a clue as to who is an effective manager" (4).

In the prevalent socio-economic scenario, one can avail guidance from Gita. Lord declares. "Whenever the evil triumphs over the good, hold of righteousness declines, I manifest myself to establish the kingdom of truth"(Web). Righteous behaviour and truthful living can cure many ills of the world; ills which have arisen out of insane pursuit of selfish material gains and which have given rise to stress. Lord Krishna suggests a remedy to overcome mental agitation and achieve inner tranquillity. And that remedy is yoga. Contrary to the general notion, Lord Krishna states that mere physical postures and breathing exercises do not constitute yoga; they are just the beginning of one type of yoga. Actual yoga involves harmonizing all energy-material and spiritual with the original source of energy, the Supreme. This unequivocal call for living in harmony with the Supreme is of intrinsic value in solving the fundamental human problems. The need is to understand our responsibilities towards our self, humanity and universe at large.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Source of Support: Authors want to thank president governing council for this project work

Conflict of interest: No

REFERENCES

1. Desai, Mahadev. *The Gita According to Gandhi*. Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1977. Print.
2. Dayananda, Swami. *The Teaching of the Bhagavad Gita*. New Delhi: Vision Books, 1989. Print.
3. Chatterjee, R.K. *The Gita And Its Culture*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1987. Print.
4. Ghosh, Pragati. "Essay on the Importance of Gita in the Modern Age." Web. www.shareyouressays.com/113042/essay-on-the-importance-of-gita-in-the-modern-age. accessed on 2.12.16.