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Ananya Srinivas

Assistant Professor, Department
of Psychology, Surana College,
Bengaluru, Karnataka, India

The psychosocial analysis of the Bhagavad Gita: It's comprehension for personal well-being as well as global peace and harmony

Ananya Srinivas

Abstract

The Bhagavad Gita has had a great impact, and the power contained in the adhyayas' composition is what has endured through the ages and resonated so deeply with people. Arjuna stands in for the entire mortal world, with all of its inhabitants receiving the divine knowledge bestowed upon him, and Krishna serves as his mentor, guide, and counsellor. Man has used the Gita's principles in a variety of disciplines, including criminology, psychiatry, administration, and law. The Gita represented everything that makes up the world, human nature, and all of existence in its physical form. The aim of the research paper is to analyse the Gita and derive the fundamentals of harmony and peace on both a personal and a global scale. The terms "peace" and "harmony" are associated with the individual at the most supreme level. It is this fine line that keeps the world as it is together; world peace is a subjective attribute. The conflict that arose in Arjuna's mind regarding the kind of deeds that needed to be done gave rise to the Gita. In his desperate situation, Krishna offers him the counterintuitive explanation that in order to bring about peace and harmony, destruction is necessary. The fundamental law of the universe and the quality that permeates every man will also be described using these terms. The Gita's psychosocial analysis will facilitate in demonstrating the significance of the shlokas' composition as well as the complexity of man and the accuracy of behavioural predictions made 5000 years ago and it is not constrained by any religious affiliation.

Keyword: Gita, world peace, harmony, Krishna, consciousness, psychology, human mind, universe, meaning, violence

Introduction

The term peace in Sanskrit comes from the root word 'sham' which means calm, peaceful and tranquility. Peace is the basic and the final need that drives people into actions. However, little is realized that the absence of any action can also facilitate the attainment of peace. The Gita has a guided therapeutic structure in which Krishna helps Arjuna throughout the chapters by first providing him a cathartic release, next by teaching him the ways of releasing anxiety and achieving peace through and understanding of the self, the world and the truth of the self as part of the world and the world as very thing within the self. The entire process of growth and go beyond one's true potential occurs when the ego loses its false sense of identity. What Arjuna underwent was anxiety neurosis and with that he became lost and dumbfounded. His nervous breakdown caused him to become a nobody. This attribute of becoming a no-one is what leads a person to better again understand what he is.

Man experiences adversities and conflicts and faces circumstances which provide a tremendous sense of loss only because he has to undergo and process of unlearning. With constant exposure to the world and everyday experiences, man always has the tendency to identify with someone or something and that is the basic need, the need to affiliate. The search for the self is also primary to the ancient systems of knowledge in India. The search for one's identity makes man get attached to many labels and false impressions and in the quest of finding himself, he becomes lost in the identification with the many labels such as his religion, his sexuality, his community, his profession, his race, his habits and society he lives in. Krishna, therefore, guides the entire mortal world through Arjuna, into the true nature of oneself that is devoid of any external meaning. This is the process of unlearning that takes place in man (Narayanswamy, R. 2021) [6].

Corresponding Author:

Ananya Srinivas

Assistant Professor, Department
of Psychology, Surana College,
Bengaluru, Karnataka, India

Unlearning is also a form of learning in which man drops all the superficial identities that he has taken on himself and he falsely perceives himself to be something and someone that he is not and in order to better account for the loss, the Gita provides both comfort as well as a condolence in moulding man's personality as a whole. According to Easwaran (1997) ^[17], there is no significant problem in life that cannot be solved by consulting the Bhagavad Gita. In recent years, the Gita has been recognised as a perpetual source of wisdom in many fields, including psychiatry, management, administration, and leadership, extending its acceptance beyond Hinduism and Indian borders. Sharma (1999) ^[18] said that with the slow but growing popularity of the Bhagavad Gita in solving organisational difficulties in recent years, there has been a growing interest among management experts in examining the notion of Karma Yoga. The Bhagavad Gita conserves energy and purifies the mind by encouraging one to labour for a purpose greater than one's ego. Furthermore, Verma *et al.* (2014) ^[19] proposed that knowing the ideas of the Bhagavad Gita and applying them in daily life as a useful strategy for stress management and coping. According to Bhatia *et al.* (2013) ^[20] the Gita advises psychiatrists and mental health practitioners to incorporate spirituality into their therapeutic arsenal.

The process of achieving peace and harmony can also be understood with the dissemination of the Gita into phases of destruction of man's ego which is falsely identifies with the external objects and circumstances and then proceeding into the phase of filling oneself with higher knowledge and verity. The next phase will be to transcend with the already existing knowledge and work hard for the betterment of the society as a whole and the last phase is integration of oneself with the highest consciousness and also integration of the self with everything around it. The entire process of Krishna helping Arjuna to come out of his nervous breakdown and guiding him to achieve the highest potential that he is meant to have. The psychological techniques used in the entire Gita will also be assessed in the paper and help provide a better change and achieve a state of peace both at the individual and the global level.

The entire process of growth and go beyond one's true potential occurs when the ego loses its false sense of identity. What Arjuna underwent was anxiety neurosis and with that he became lost and dumbfounded. His nervous breakdown caused him to become a nobody. This attribute of becoming a no-one is what leads a person to better again understand what he is. Man experiences adversities and conflicts and faces circumstances which provide a tremendous sense of loss only because he has to undergo and process of unlearning. With constant exposure to the world and everyday experiences, the ego identifies itself with various labels and assumes that these are its true self. The basic question always arises as to why it was Arjuna who was always chosen to be the bearer of knowledge and not others who were equally wise and worthy. The eldest son, Dharmaraja, who was the epitome of wisdom and perfection, did not have the queries in his mind and his resolution was firm. The Gita could not be given to him because his mind lacked the curiosity and the emptiness that was desired. By emptiness, it doesn't mean that a person can be a blank slate without knowledge, it means that they must know but still not know at the same time. The mind which believes it knows all, will fail to acquire anything else. The second son, Bhishma, was the epitome of physical strength and brute and his knowledge expansion was limited. He was someone who would stand for what is right and fight at one's

beck and call. The twins, Nakula and Sahadeva were dutiful brothers who never went against their older brothers. The only person who also has the resistance was Arjuna and it was because of this that he was the most eligible to be the one receding the knowledge as well as the best representation for the mortal world.

The paradox of using violence in maintaining peace

The process of peace and harmony can be well established with the progression from the first chapter to the greater and intricate understanding of the concepts of karma, dharma and the way of righteousness. And the nature of one's conscience and the higher order of justice. The achievement of peace is not with ignorance but rather with the achievement of a superior hold of knowledge. This knowledge is not attained temporary and forgotten later. It comes with the realization of the self with the Cosmos. Knowledge of oneself and everything around oneself is what leads to the attainment of peace (M Gandhi, 1959) ^[11]. Hence, in order to receive the highest knowledge, one must begin the process of unlearning. The only method of doing so is by letting go of what one has held on as true and considered to be real. The process of this loss of identity occurs with the adversity of the mind. Man has always pondered why they must experience pain and conflicts and undergo the many things that they do. The Pandavas underwent a series of unfortunate events, exiled twice from the kingdom, abused and put to trial every single time, However, it was required for them to finally achieve a stable stance (Plews-Ogan M, Owens JE, & May NB (2013) ^[7]. It was required for them to rule as emperor for the entire bharatavarsha. Adversity helps the mind grow. Adversity helps harness better qualities in men and these qualities are more sustainable (Snyder, S. (2013) ^[10]. The Gita is beautiful process of educating the self and detaching its association with the ego which is again associated with false identities and helping it journey through the process of growth, rejuvenation, transformation and transcendence. The first chapter leads with Arjuna losing his sense of fighting, his sense of existence and his very purpose. There is loss of meaning in life that he's undergoing. There is overwhelming attachment that he's seeing with everyone and Krishna slowly starts to give him the real representation of the world.

The significance of losing oneself to attain one's true self

Krishna, in the second adhyaya, lays the foundation of the Samkhya yoga which focuses on the rigorous practice of training the mind by understanding the emotions of fear and strength.

“Karpnyadoso pahat svabhava
Pracchami tvam dharma samudacetah
Yac chreyah syan niscitam nruhi tan me
Siyas te ham mam tvam prapannam” (ch2, verse 7)

It is also in this chapter that Arjuna's completely renounces everything that he is and becomes ambiguous and surrenders to Krishna, the supreme godhead of knowledge. Strength is not the absence of fear but the understanding of one's power to overcome this fear. The mind cannot reason when it is emotional. These include both the positive and the negative. Numerous studies have shown that when one is extremely ecstatic or when one is grief stricken, no decision should be made because the person will soon regret the decision because the mind was not conscious or sensible when it was done. Bhagavad-Gita presents that the HRD begins with the

psychology of self-realization leading to self-development. The Bhagavad-Gita focuses on the self first, as the greatness in any field is never achieved without tremendous self-discipline (Avinashilingam, 1975) ^[21]. We learn of the subtle distinction of violence. The primary objective is to always maintain peace, however, war is required when one is driven to do it and when there is cruelty and injustice, and all negotiations fail, war is the way. Negative emotions and actions are always justified with the intentions placed behind them. If a mother hits her child, it is not violence or abuse, if the mother wishes to curb her child's behavior. Hence, violence is required in order to maintain peace.

The nature of aggression in man

Aggression is a basic instinct of human nature and exists at the primitive level. It is more pronounced and automatic in animals. And one thing common to all species is affective or defensive aggression and predatory aggression (Seigal, 2009). What we focus here is defensive aggression which focuses on that primary nature of protection. When this basic need to activate the person becomes equipped with the necessary strength not for destruction but for protecting those who require protection. Aggression is what powers an individual to protect themselves and their people and everyone else without losing one's humanity. This is the art of war in the Gita. When one understands the purpose of one's fighting, one will not lose themselves.

The nature of Atman and the qualities depicted in the characters

The second chapter speaks of the nature a qualities of the individual consciousnesses or the jivatma and states that the physical body is mortal and dying everyday. The body is the physical mechanism through which the soul acts an experiences the external world.

“Avyakto yam achintyo yam avikarayo yam uchyate
Tasmad evam viditvai nam na nusocitum arhasi”

Hence, the physical body is something that will disappear and the soul will continue to live and hence, Arjuna is taught to fight against the negative qualities that are stringent in the Kauravas and by annihilating these qualities, Arjuna will be bring about the state of order and peace. Here, the discrimination between a persons behaviors, their actions and their intentions comes into play. Psychologists always differentiate a person from their behavior in order to understand that the person is innate good and it is their behaviour that is wrong or bad. The person is thus the Atman who is neither formless nor trait-less and imperishable and acquires qualities only after the acquisition of the material body. Hence, with this universal truth, the battle that is fought is not against anyone, but rather the destruction of what it is that they represent and that is resentment, hatred, delusions, jealousy, cruelty, injustice, arrogance, pride and wrath. The destruction of these nonnegotiable qualities is the process of attainment of peace and harmony.

The laws of Karma

The Gita always emphasized on the rightful action and this is always followed by rightful knowledge of dharma, that is, one's duties. Hence, to attain peace and enlightenment, it is wrong to assume that man needs to renounce the work of senses an place restrictions on his mind. According to Lord Krishna (Chapter III, verse 11), if we nourish one another, we

can achieve the Supreme goal. King Janaka is an excellent example of someone who attained perfection (or self-realization) solely through Karma Yoga. What is advocated is the mode of Nishkama karma or desireless action. One must perform their duties with an apathetic attitude in order to direct people for the betterment of society (ch 3, verse 20) This means that the person who is still amidst his materialistic bandages, will perform his role without being overly attached and this kind of karma is non binding.

“Na karmanam anarambhan naishkarmyam puruso ‘snute
Na ca samnyansanad eva siddhim samadhigacchathi”
(ch3, verse 4)

His frame of mind will always accrue towards the higher source based on his affiliation of the self or the ego with the three gunas, and not dwell among the two ends of virtue and sin. Desire means that the mind requires a sense of fruition or recognition for the action that it has done and this is what adds on to the karmic memory that takes people onto the next lives in order to exhaust their baggage. Karma is action regardless of whether it is a virtue or a sin and in order to end the cycle of this subtle loop, there is a constant need to be mindful of every action. This mindfulness will come to those who are aware of their true self and this comes without effort or restriction of one's senses.

The Gita beautiful help man understand his duties and the means of performing his action and the subtle manner of renouncing the fruits of is action and attainment of liberation through the process of Dhyana or meditation. Thus, Krishna offers that whatever action man performs, his intention should be focused on the greater purpose and his actions and the fruits of his actions should be offered to the higher source or parandhama, thus liberating the Atman from its bandages. Hence, to maintain peace, there can be violence against those who disturb it, only if the mind does not evade from its true purpose and the ideal cause. If there are no selfish motives to be acclaimed in the process, then that action is one filled with purity and is worthy of being performed.

Materialism and Spiritualism

The major reason why man becomes entangled in the worldly possessions is because he does not strive to rise from the mundane world to train his mind and body in ethical and spiritual discipline. The destruction of peace and harmony of the mind and the world comes not when one is transfixed with the wrong identifications of the world and its many transgressions. The proficiency in the Bhagavad-Gita reveals the eternal principles which are fundamental and essential for spiritual life from all perspectives and the esoteric truths hidden within all religious scriptures (Muniapan, 2014). On a spiritual level, the focus is on the battle between the higher self and the lower self, the war between man's spiritual calling and the dictates of the body, mind and senses for material pleasures (Rosen, 2002) ^[22].

Peace is lost with desire, attachment and selfishness and when the person thinks only of themselves and what they are immediately attached to. The purpose of Krishna expounding the universal message is because of the ignorance of the mind that leads to a great number of calamities. The ignorant minds are the one that are already doomed and no number of educating them will make them improve. Krishna says, "When a man's consciousness is not disturbed by competing circumstances or diverted, he will acquire Yoga" (verse 53, Chapter II: Bhagavad-Gita). He says, "Mind is like a friend to

those who have control over them, while mind is an adversary to those who do not have control over them" (verse 6, Chapter VI: Bhagavad-Gita). In the chapter 6, verse 35, of the Bhagavad-Gita, Lord Krishna says, "O son of Kunti, though it is certainly difficult to overcome the restless of mind, it can be done by only consistent practise and detachment" (Satpathy, 2010) [23]. The mind is a weapon and with each use, it can either grow strong or wicked. Ego develops strongly with the identification of the self with one's body and providing greatest pleasure to the physical aspect, thus ignoring the true purpose of being. Wars and fights and acts of terrorism and treacherous murders occur only because the seed thought of the mind is to ravish in its own beliefs and pleasure systems, thus ignoring the greatest sense. Guilt and regret are never harnessed in the mind because the ego has dismembered itself from the intellect. The self will stop watching the things it wages wars and battles over and will surely abandon the selfish thoughts, if it comes in contact with adversity. When a great calamity hits the mind, it will demolish everything the ego holds as true and prominent and it will understand the impermanence of objects and slowly realise its lost self.

Prevailing over the three gunas

It is human tendency and the nature of the association of the oscillating mind with one of the three gunas, namely, Sattva, Rajas or Tamas.

“Sattvam sukhe anjayathi rajah karmani bharaatha
Jnanam avtya tu tamah pramade sanjayaty uta”

(ch14, verse 9)

All the three qualities are manifested as part of the natural sustenance of life, but it is however, the recognition with and the conscious development of one that molds man's personality and character, otherwise, he becomes a mere slave to his sense and this view is what causes destruction and wickedness.

“Rajas tamas ca bhibhuya sattvain bhavati bharaatha
Rajah sattvam tamas cai va tamah sattvam rajah tatha”

(ch14, verse 10)

It is again through the association with the Sattva guna that a man becomes embodied with humility and good actions and with tamasic and rajasic that gives fruition to greed, restlessness and a state of ignorance in the mind. Since the three gunas are equally active, every human is bound to feel aversive emotions such as envy, pride, greed and lust and it is the transcendence of not just one but all the three gunas that marks a person as a bearer of good character and is one who neither gets extremely happy nor extremely grieves. The one who has transcended the three qualities is one who remains constant and unflattering with the dualities of the world and its many emotions.

The nature of the dualities

“DVA bhataragauloke smin daiva asura eva ca
Daivo visatrasah prokta asuram partha me srnu”

The mind is always made up of the two dualities, the light and the dark, the divine and the demonic, the good and the bad and it is always the conscious suppression of one and enhancement of the other that creates the life of peace and well-being, not just at the individual level, but at the greater

level of life. The dualities never exist at two ends of the spectrum but rather as a continuum, just as everyone has a positive side, we are equally capable of hurting and vice versa.

“Niscayan srnu me tatra tyag bhaata sattama
Tyago hi purusa vyaghra trividhah samprakiritah”

It is important to cut down everything that one holds dear in order to ascend the greater good. The process of detachment does not mean that one must forsake their duties and travel into the spiritual path. It means that one must perform his duties with a sense of detached attachment. Vyamoha or over indulgence with any object or person or situation is to be cut down. This takes practise and conscious effort. It is always simpler and less difficult to leave everything behind and attain true sense of self. It is however, more recognized when a person stays amidst everyone and learns not to be influenced or attached or hindered or mesmerized. That is the true statement of the world's order. This is what creates peace. Peace is a very subjective and relative term. It cannot be attained easily but with conscious practise and effort. Individual peace will generate and create a chain reaction of overall and general peace. The true nature of peace is that no matter what turbulence occurs in the external world, the mind remains untouched and stable. It is unbiased and serene. The serene mind will accept a person regardless of their behaviour, an effort made will be to transform the person and not at their temporary behaviour.

Conclusion

Man is not to be understood in isolation but as a casual factor of his senses and his ego's affiliation with the three gunas. The Gita beautifully gives the message of choice of prevailing over to Sattvik guna and then renouncing that as well. The mind that desires and is greedy and is self exuberant, is the mind that performs actions to receive only what his selfish mind wants. The concluding answer that Gita provides is that it is the duty of the knowing to help the ignorant rather than not engaging in any action at all. The Atman is not a physical or a sensory entity but rather an energy that can transcend space and time. It has only become limited with the dwelling in the body and mesmerized with the actions of the senses. The ending note is that every soul is worthy of transitioning and no one can be labeled as good or bad. It is their actions and behaviors that is to be changed and not the self, the self I, the affiliating entity with the qualities of the material world. Peace is the original point at which everything has started and it is also the original point thought which all things will prevail. Peace is sometimes obtained with destruction and violence of the rajasic qualities and it always goes back into the state of equilibrium, the balance that the entire universe is maintained upon. This can be seen with nature as well. The natural disasters that occur can be seen as a form of rage and violence but it however, trying to expend that which is more and retain the balance. The Gita thus systematically provides insights on who one is and what one is capable and should be doing. It acts as a rule book and helps man connect to his true self. It should not be biased with any religious affiliation but rather accepted as a book for always remembering one's forgotten self. It acts as a strong reminder with its ancient verses of how man is and has always been, thus it is *sanatana*, one that is imperishable and is ever lasting.

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