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Psychotherapeutic influence on arjunas behavioural transformation

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Abstract

Psychotherapy is a mental health treatment method that aims to bring positive changes in human behavior, control emotions, correct negative thoughts, and live happily. The Srimat Bhagavad Gita focuses on Lord Krishna's guidance to Arjuna in the Bhisma Parva of the Mahabharata. The text addresses Arjuna's negative issues, such as depression, anxiety, and a lack of leadership skills. Before the war, Lord Krishna observed Arjuna's malbehaviours, which included sadness, fear, difficulty making decisions, dilemmas etc. As a psychotherapist, Krishna adopted psychological steps (gaining self-confidence, resolution from doubt, turmoil to equanimity, self-doubt to self-realization, sense control, reactive to proactive, correct knowledge, conflict to integration—CBT) to help Arjuna's behavioural transformations. The Bhagavad Gita offers profound insights into the human psyche and personal growth. It emphasizes duty, selflessness, mindfulness, and the nature of self, providing a framework for understanding and addressing modern psychological challenges. Integrating these teachings with modern psychotherapeutic practice enriches therapeutic interventions.

Keyword: Psychotherapy, bhagvad gita, moral dilemma, mal-behaviours, behavioural transformation

Introduction

Psychologists are constantly researching the human mind and human behaviour. This has led to the discovery of many psychological methods. Psychotherapy is a method discovered to control psychological and human behavioral problems. "Psychotherapy is the informed and intentional application of clinical methods and interpersonal stances derived from established psychological principles for the purpose of assisting people to modify their behavior, cognition, emotions, or other personnel characteristics in directions that the participants deem desirable" (Campbell LF, Norcross JC, Vasquez MJ, Kaslow NJ, March 2013) [3]. The term psychotherapy is derived from the Greek words psyche and therapia, which mean mental treatment. In 2012, the American Psychological Association discussed psychotherapy based on the definition provided by American psychologist John C Norcross, who wrote that psychotherapy is the informed and intentional application of clinical methods and interpersonal stances derived from established psychological principles for the purpose of assisting people to modify their behavior, cognition, emotions, or other personnel characteristics in directions that the participants deem desirable. The aim of this psychotherapy is to bring about positive changes in human behaviour, control emotions, correct negative thoughts, live happily, etc. Identification of the individual's emotions, thoughts, and positive change is possible through this psychotherapy. Psychotherapy is a method of mental health treatment that involves the control of mental disorders, human behaviour, and the proper application of emotions. There are different parts of this method, such as individual psychotherapy, group psychotherapy, and short-and long-term psychotherapy. Human curiosity to see the unseen and to know the unknown has constantly focused on research. People gain knowledge from the environment through observation. Through this perception, along with the objective knowledge, the subjective state is also created. Feeling is this sincere state, and emotion is also a sincere state like feeling, which is expressed through the body apparatus. It is a disturbed state of mind, as McDougall said; it is regarded as a mode of experience that accompanies the working within us of instinctive impulses (outline of psychology).

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According to modern psychologists, emotion is a spontaneous manifestation of a state that disturbs a person physically and mentally. Apparently, emotion and feeling seem to be the same, but emotion is cantered to feeling. Due to strong feelings, an active excitatory state is created in the body and mind. In this situation, it is called emotion. As a result of its effect, changes in blood circulation, heart processes, facial changes, changes in vision, and changes in body language can be observed.

Lord Krishna's guidance to Arjuna in the Bhishma Parva of the Mahabharata is the main subject of Srmat Bhagavad Gita. The hypocritical diplomacy of the Kauravas, the defeat of the Pandavas in the game of dice, the banishment of the

Pandavas, the battle of Kurukshetra to gain sovereignty, etc. are the subjects of the Mahabharata, but the Gita explains only the guidance of Lord Krishna to Arjuna. The guidance given by Lord Krishna to Arjuna as an ideal guide is completely psychological and is still modern today, although it was written in approximately 5000 BC. At the request of Arjuna, Lord Krishna placed the chariot between the two armies (Kaurava & Pandava) and seeing the families of both sides caused in Arjuna depressed, thoughts of war outcome, uncontrolled use of senses, anxiety, fear, lust, wonder, inferiority, distress, horror, despair, apprehension, Inability to take decisions, lack of self-awareness, stress, lack of self-control, lack of leadership skills etc are negative issues.

Actions of Psychotherapist (Lord Krishna)

Problems of Client(Arjuna)	Actions of Psychotherapist (Lord Krishna)
Faint Face, Gradually getting wet body, Trembling Body, Lack of control over the use of senses, Restlessness in mind, Burning sensation in Body, Hallucination and Delusions, Forgetting Duty, Unable to control emotions, Moral and Emotional conflict, Inability to make decisions, Anxiousness, Hope for Results, Disrupted Mental health.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Observe client physical and Mental status. 2. Provides suitable environment. 3. Listening with Patience. 4. Develop Relationship. (Counsellor is a relative of client and also a Friend, Philosopher and Guide). 5. Modifying Mal-behaviour. 6. Encourage to express the feelings. 7. Confidence gaining. 8. Explain knowledge with ultimate truth. 9. Modifying Procedure. 10. Gaining Insight. 11. xi. single session.

Transformation of Arjuna's behaviors through psychotherapy

Lord Krishna duly observed all the problems existing in Arjuna. Seeing the Kauravas and Pandavas on the battlefield, all the negative aspects revealed in Arjuna's behavior before the war are sadness, thinking about the consequences of war, uncontrolled use of the senses, fear, infatuation, wonder, inferiority, lack of duty, uncontrolled emotions, lack of leadership qualities, inability to make decisions, etc. As a psychotherapist, he more seriously observed the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of the affected person (Arjun). Thoughts create different feelings, and variations in behavior are influenced by feelings. Krishna has adopted specific steps according to psychology to help Arjuna solve the problems, such as client physical and mental status observation, observing behaviors and mal-behaviors, establishing good relations, creating a suitable environment for sharing feelings, eliminating fascination with real knowledge and confidence reception, changing knowledge and behaviors by habit, and adversity or apathy. The transformation of Arjuna's behavior and mindset through Krishna's guidance in the Bhagavad Gita depicts a significant evolution:

1. **Gaining Self-confidence:** Krishna has repeatedly used the words related to Arjuna for Arjun's confidence reception and Duty awareness, such as-पुरुषर्षभः, महाबाहुः, परन्तपः, कौन्तेयः, भारतः, धनञ्जयः, भरतसत्तमः. Through the use of these adjective words, Arjuna's qualities, the excellence of his duties are repeatedly remembered, he reminded Arjuna of the Kshatriyas duty by giving accurate knowledge – शौर्यं तेजो धृतिर्दाक्ष्यं युद्धे चाप्यपलायनम् । दानमीश्वरभावश्च क्षात्रं कर्म स्वभावजम् ॥ (SBG-18.43).

In order to make aware of the negative effects by presenting his example for self-consciousness, Shri Krishna says-

न मे पार्थास्ति कर्तव्यं त्रिषु लोकेषु किञ्चन ।
नानावाप्तमवाप्तव्यं वर्त एव च कर्मणि ॥ (SBG-3.22).
यदि ह्यहम न वर्तेयं जातु कर्मण्यतन्द्रितः।
मम वर्तमानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥ (SBG-3.23)

2. **Resolution:** Initially, Arjuna is haunted by doubts and moral dilemmas on the kurukshetra battlefield. Through Krishna's psychotherapeutic guidance, which includes teaching about dharma (duty) and the nature of atman (soul), Arjuna gains clarity and resolve. He moves from indecision and confusion to a solid understanding of his duty as a warrior and his role in the cosmic system.
3. **Equanimity:** Arjuna begins in a state of turmoil, wracked with sorrow, pity and fear. Krishna guides him to sthitaprajna (mental equanimity) through the teaching of vairagya (detachment), samattva (self-control) and the impermanence of life. This transformation allows Arjuna to maintain composure and focus even in the face of adversity.
4. **Self-Realization:** Initially questioning his own abilities and the righteousness of his actions, Arjuna comes to a deeper understanding of his true self and his divine purpose (Svadharm). Krishna's psychotherapeutic guidance helps Arjuna recognize his innate power, align his actions with his higher self, and perform his duties without attachment to results.
5. **Integration:** Through Krishna's teachings on Bhakti Yoga and Jnana Yoga, Arjuna unifies his intellect, emotions, and actions. He moves from inner conflict to a state of integrated wisdom, where his decisions are guided by spiritual intuition and a deep understanding of cosmic principles.
6. **Proactive:** Initially reactive to external circumstances and his own emotions, Arjuna transforms into a proactive agent of change. Empowered by Krishna's

psychotherapeutic guidance, he takes on his role with clarity, confidence and a sense of purpose, demonstrating leadership and resilience in the face of challenges.

7. **Correct knowledge:** The inconsistent behaviours observed in Arjuna require knowledge of the proper subject which is observed to be lacking in Arjuna. So Lord Krishna presented the issues in a proper form before Arjuna through special discussion. Srimat Bhagwat Gita says that the main enemy of attaining proper knowledge is infatuation, because of this infatuation, man moves towards darkness. Infatuation is the main cause of all the problems that greatly affected Arjuna before the Kurukshetra war. In this regard, Shri Krishna said-
कुतस्त्वा कश्मलमिदं विषमे समुपस्थितम् ।
अनार्यजुष्टमस्वर्ग्यमकीर्तिकर्मजुना॥ (SBG-2.2)

Therefore, as a psychotherapist, Shri Krishna accepted Arjuna's prayer and gave guidance on the nature of the soul and self-reliance – स्वधर्ममपि चावेक्ष्य न विकम्पि तुमुर्हसि (SBG-2.31) He has shown the way to the removing of infatuation through proper knowledge of the effects of religious practice, observance and renunciation of attachment-कर्मण्येवाधिकारास्ते मा फलेषु कदाचनः (SBG-2.47), loss-gain, happiness-sadness, equanimity towards victory and defeat etc. That is, the message of controlling

emotions such as happiness, sadness and love by correcting the negative or incorrect information existing in the human mind through correct knowledge, it has been observed in this book.

8. **Sense control:** Control of the senses गण्डीवं संसते हस्तात् त्वक् चैव परिदह्यते । (SBG-1.30) is more important than control of the emotions, because knowledge of the subject is received through the senses. As a result of the control of ten senses and one special sense, human life is controlled and people are happy. The meaning of the above verse is that Arjuna's behavior shows unrestrained use of senses. So Sri Krishna describes the character of the meek person who is equanimous in happiness and sorrow always non-attachment to restrained use of the senses is meek person. Controlling the restless mind is equal to controlling the wind. Lord Krishna said to Arjuna as a means of controlling the mind-अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण च गृह्यते । (SBG-6.35). In this regard, he presents the example of a static person. One who is not affected by the emotions like happiness, sadness, attachment, fear, anger, etc. is stable-दुःखेष्वनुद्विग्नमनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः । वीतरागभयत्रोधः स्थितधीर्मुनिरुच्यते ॥ (SBG-2.56).

Behavioural Transformation of Arjuna

Arjuna's Problems	Appropriate Method	Transformation/ Out Come
Faint Face, Gradually getting wet body, Trembling Body, Lack of control over the use of senses, Restlessness in mind, Burning sensation in Body, Hallucination and Delusions, Forgetting Duty, Unable to control emotions, Moral and Emotional conflict, Depression, Inability to make decisions, Anxiousness, Hope for Results, Disrupted Mental health.	CognitiveTherapy -“Jyana yoga” True-Knowledge, Apathy, Knowledge of Self-righteousness, Intellectual and Emotional austerity, Knowledge of senses and Subjects. Behavioural Therapy - “Karma yoga” Appropriate Practice	Clarity in Subject, Duty Awareness, positive Changes in thoughts and Behaviours, Satisfaction in Mind, self Confidence, Control of sense and Emotions, Disillusionment, deleted all error thoughts.

In short, Krishna's psychotherapeutic intervention in the form of spiritual education enabled Arjuna to undergo a profound psychological and behavioural transformation, ultimately preparing him to meet his destiny on the battlefield of Kurukshetra with wisdom, courage and inner peace

Conclusion

Examining the Bhagavad Gita through a psychotherapeutic lens, it becomes clear that the ancient text offers profound insights into the complexities of human psyche and personal growth and spiritual evolution. Through teachings about duty (dharma), selflessness, mindfulness, and the nature of self (atman), the Gita provides a framework for understanding and addressing modern psychological challenges. Its emphasis on action without attachment and the importance of inner peace resonate deeply with contemporary therapeutic approaches aimed at alleviating stress, anxiety, and existential dilemmas. Furthermore, the Gita's concept of yoga as a path to the unity of mind, body, and spirit provides practical guidance for achieving mental well-being and harmony. Integrating these timeless teachings with modern psychotherapeutic practice can enrich therapeutic interventions and deepen our understanding of human nature, resilience, and the search for inner fulfillment. Thus, Bhagavad Gita emerges not only as a spiritual scripture but also as a profound psychological resource that inspires and guides individuals on their journey towards wholeness and self-discovery.

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