

# THE BHAGAVADGĪTĀ: AS WAY FOR PEACE IN THE 21st CENTURY

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**Abstract:** The *Bhagavadgītā* occupies the central place in the ethical history of Indian philosophy. It is the quintessence of Hindu culture and the sum and substance of Indian philosophical theory and practice, metaphysics and ethics, religion, mysticism, tradition etc. For millions of people it is the gospel of truth, the message of divine life and an inspiring and stimulating ideal for the conduct of life. The *Bhagavadgītā* teaches us how to live life with peaceful mind. In present paper researcher discusses about Mahabharata war which is continue in human being. *Kurukshetra* is within and we have to win this battle with teaching of the *Bhagavadgītā*. Day by day we are going to be highly selfish. We forget to sacrifice for others. Now a day a citizen forgets to sacrifice for his country or society. For his nearest neighbors one cannot think to sacrifice. One brother forgets to sacrifice for his other brothers and sisters. Even a son is so selfish that he does not bother to do his minimum duty for his parents. Even some parents are seen to send them in *Bṛiddhāsram*. Some old parents are seen to knock the door of the law to get their minimum requirements.

We can say that, this problem can be solved through the proper application of the teaching of *Bhagavadgītā* in our life, which leads us to perform *niṣkāma karma*. We can say that this *niṣkāma karma* leads us to peaceful life.

**Keywords:** *Bhagavadgītā, niṣkāma karma, peace, mokṣa.*

***Kurukshetra within Man:*** *Paramahansa yogananda* (2002) had written his book *God speaks to Arjuna*, the *Gītā*-gospel it was given over five thousand years ago in battle *Kurukshetra* Field, from Lord Krishna to *Arjuna*. The real *Kurukshetra* is within us. The battle of The Mahabharata still rages within us. Our ignorance it is *Dhritarashtra*. Our individual soul is *Arjuna*. The indwelling indwelling in our heart is Lord Krishna, the coachman. The body is our chariot. Senses (*Indriyas*) are horses. The mind, the selfishness, the senses, mental impressions, latent tendencies, cravings, tastes and dislikes, lust, jealousy, greed, pride e hypocrisy are our terrible enemies. The Gita gives us practical lessons to regulate our daily life. It tells us how to overcome ours enemies, how to develop the divine virtues that It will help us achieve inner peace. The message of the *Gītā* is the message of sacrifice, love and duty. Love all human beings, share what we have with us others, overcome the little likes and dislikes and do your duty Right. These are the *Gītā* lessons they give inner peace for us.

**Jñāna Yoga:** Now we explain about three kind of yoga *Jñāna Yoga*, *bhakti yoga* and *karma yoga* because all these yoga helps us to lead peaceful life. We try to discuss three kind of yoga very shortly. *Jñāna Yoga* or *Jñāna Mārga* is the process of converting intellectual knowledge into practical wisdom. The term ‘*jñāna*’ literally means ‘knowledge’, but yoga here means the process of meditative awareness that leads to illuminative wisdom. It is not a method by which we try to find rational answers to eternal questions; rather it is a part of meditation leading to self-enquiry and self-realization. Before practicing *Jñāna Yoga*, the aspirant needs to have integrated the lessons of the other yogic paths-for without selflessness and love of God, strength of body and mind the search for self-realization can become mere idle speculation.

Knowledge is compared to light that dispels the ignorance of man like a light beam dispels the darkness. The brighter is the light, the lesser is the darkness. It is impossible to do the right action unless man has the right knowledge of the cause and effect of his action and faith in supreme. It is said in the *Gītā*, “There is nothing on earth equal in purity to wisdom. He who becomes perfected by yoga finds this of himself, in his self in course of time.” (4/38) and, “He who has faith, who is absorbed in it (i.e. wisdom) and who has subdued his senses gains wisdom and having gained wisdom he attains quickly the supreme peace.” (4/39)

Knowledge is intimately interwoven with faith and action. All actions test the faith of the person. If the desired result is not achieved, the person revisits the faith just like a scientist revisits an old theory and tries to find an explanation for the said failure. It results in modification of the faith of the person.

It can be said that *Jñāna Mārga* or *Jñāna Yoga* is a process of learning to discriminate between what is real and what is not real, what is eternal and what is not eternal. Through a steady advancement in realization of the distinction between Real and Unreal, the Eternal and Temporal, one turns into a *Jñāni*. This is essentially a path of knowledge and discrimination in regards to the difference between the immortal soul (*ātman*) and the body.

**Bhakti Yoga:** *Bhakti Yoga* is based on the doctrine ‘Love is God and God is Love’. The God is the beloved and the devotee is the lover. In the *Bhakti Yoga* or *Bhakti Mārga*, everything is but a manifestation of the divine and all else is meaningless, including ego. When the devotee is blessed by divine grace he feels an undivided union and non-dual consciousness prevails. This yoga is regarded as the most direct method to merge in cosmic consciousness.

*Bhakti mārga* appeals particularly to those of an emotional nature. Through worship, prayer, chanting and various types of ritual, one surrenders himself to God or object of faith, channeling and transmuting his emotions into unconditional love and devotion. Devotion is common to all religions. We must unconditionally surrender ourselves to God with all our weakness and God helps us in attaining liberation. Just like father helps a son or daughter to achieve his or her aim or goal. Continuous meditation of God or object of faith gradually decreases

the ego of the practitioner. Suppressed emotions get freedom and the purification of the inner self takes place. Slowly the practitioner or devotee loses the self identity and becomes one with the God or the object of faith; this is the state of self-realization.

**Karma yoga:** Karma yoga is explained in the third chapter of the *Gītā*. Generally karma means work or an action. Karma is a Sanskrit term that comes from the root 'kri', which meaning to act and signifies action or deed. Karma is the sum total of good works, bad works and mixed works which each and every individual perform during his life. It is the collective entirety of man's work or action. It is this kind of action that determines his future existence.

The *Bhagavadgītā* says, karma-yoga is a way to unite the finite soul with God through action. It unites the human will with the divine will. An individual cannot remain inactive for a single moment. One has to act for the preservation of his own existence for he is compelled to act by his organic needs and physical impulses. It is clear in the following *slokā* of the *Gītā*-

*na hi kaścit kṣaṇam api  
Jātu tiṣṭhaty akarmakṛit  
Kāryate hy avaśaḥ karma  
Sarvaḥ prakṛtijair guṇaiḥ (3/5)*

Here it can be said that, this is not our question whether we perform our karma or not. The question is that what types of karma has to be performed and what types of karma is to be abstained from. In the *Gītā* there are two types of karma-

1. *Sakāma karma* or action with expectation of fruits
2. *Niṣkāma karma* or action without any selfish desire

Lord *Kṛṣṇa* in the *Bhagavadgītā* gives an advice to *Arjuna* to perform *niṣkāma karma* in the following *slokā*-

*Karmany evā dhikāras te  
mā phaleṣu kadācana  
mā karmaphalahetur bhūr  
mā te saṅgo stv akarmaṇi (2/47)*

That is, we have the right to perform the action only if we do not have the right to desire the fruit of the action because obtaining or not obtaining the fruit of the action is not in our control and we must not perform the action expecting the fruit of the action, i.e., our fruit of the action must not be the cause of the performing action and that is why we must not give up the action, since we have no hope of fruit.

The four parts of this verse are mutually complementary and the full meaning of *karmayoga* is briefly and beautifully explained and these four parts are certainly called the *catuhsutra* of *karmayoga*. First of all, it is stated that our right is to perform an action only, but since the fruit of an action is inseparable from the action, the doubt may naturally arise that whoever has the right to perform an action also has the right to take the fruit. The Lord has made it clear in the second part of this verse that our right must not extend to fruits. Then the Lord declared in the third part of the previous verse that we must renounce the hope of the fruit, but at the same time we must not renounce action. So the meaning of this verse is that one must necessarily do one's duty without having renounced the action '*tyago nayuktaih karmasu napi ragah*'.

The concept of *nişkāma karma* of the *Gītā* is not a simple concept. It is completely composite concept because it is created by the two different concept i.e. *nişkāma* and *karma*. We know that the concept of karma is ambiguous concept and the different Indian thinkers have used the term in different senses. But *Bhagavadgītā* explains that in the concept of karma there is no any ambiguity in the sense of action. The concept of *nişkāma* also is a composite concept because it is created by the two different parts i.e. '*nih*' and '*kāma*'. Like the concept of karma the concept of *kāma* is ambiguous concept. The different thinkers have used the term *kāma* in different senses. But in the *Gītā* the concept of *kāma* has been used in the sense of sensuous desires, not in the sense of the satisfaction of sensuous desires and the concept of desire is conceptually linked with the concept of attachment.

The Sanskrit word *Shanti* means peace. What is the meaning of peace in the *Bhagavadgītā* when Does Krishna uses this word *Shanti*? There are not many wars within us? There are no furious wars in our hearts and in our minds? These internal wars cloud over our thoughts, consume our energies and make us restless. Krishna says that no man can know happiness without peace. Contagion, we began to think a particular thing of what we want, we desire. If our desire for the thing does not come true, we get angry. Once we are angry, our ability to reason and think it is clearly biased. Deception arises from our anger, then we say absurd things. We say that we deserve that thing and have the right to get it at any time cost, regardless of the consequences. We have forgotten that perhaps the thing is not ours to have, or that we you do not deserve it; or that it may not be the right time for us to have it.

Thus, from anger the illusion is born, from the illusion memory loss and from memory loss we started lose consciousness and contact with our own spirit. This is the death of inner peace. Krishna points to the wisest path. Instead of all lowering our desires to devour our peace of mind, we must develop uniformity, a subtle, intelligent attachment and disinterest in sense objects. Lasting happiness is not found externally world. Temporary experiences of joy and suffering there is in abundance, but true and lasting peace below standing is found only

inside. This is the shanty that Krishna speaks in the *Bhagavadgītā*. Without the Knowledge of this eternal, unchanging, Really imperishable: we are lost, floating in a sea of delirium and ignorance that throws us up in the air whim and deceives us into thinking that possessions and pleasure can give us meaning.

**Conclusion:** So far as our discussion is concerned it can be said that the *Bhagavadgītā* is the cream of Indian culture which gives the interpretation of Karma-Yoga. In this highly develop world *Gītā*'s concept of karma is still relevant. It is said that almost all the great personalities of the world follow the ethical path of the *Gītā*. Work or action is inevitable till we attain liberation. One need to work for the sake of liberation (*mokṣa*) and when one attains it, he has to work as instruments that the action will not be the case of bondage. The aim or goal of every action should be the welfare of humanity. And also it is to be noted that the scientific and technological developments should be based on the ethical foundation like the karma-yoga of the *Bhagavadgītā*. It can be said that the main teaching of the *Gītā* is sacrifice (*tyaga*). If we treat ourselves for sacrifice then our life will be peaceful.

Every man's life meaningful due to his sacrifice. *Kabir* expressed this truth by his following poem-

“*vaḍā huyā to kyā huyā yaisā bāḍi khejur,*  
*pānthoko chāyā nāhi phal lāgi atidūr*”

Hence *Vivekananda*'s master *Ramkrishna* advices him to be as great as a banyan tree, under the shade of which millions of poor and destitute can take their shelter.

Or we can say like *Rabindranath*-

“*Mor nām ai bole khyāta hok*  
*āmi tomāderi lok,*  
*ār kichu nay,*  
*ai hok mor ses porichaya*”

We can say that from the above discussion *niṣkāma karma* as a method, which helps us to attaining liberation as well as leads us our peaceful life. In this way if anyone follows *niṣkāma karma* or *karma-yoga* then he/she can attain liberation and can get peace and according to *Ramkrishna* our ‘*kāncā āmi*’ will be turn into ‘*pākā āmi*’ and also for *Rabindranath* our ‘*Choto āmi*’ be promoted to ‘*Baro āmi*’, and on the other side our society will be free from various types of evils.

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