



International Journal of Research in Academic World



Received: 18/April/2023

IJRAW: 2023; 2(5):64-66

Accepted: 14/May/2023

Life with Morality

*¹Dr. Jitendra Kumar and ²Dr. Priya Soni Khare

^{*1, 2}Department of Education, CMP College, University of Allahabad (A Central University), Uttar Pradesh, India.

Abstract

The situation of Arjuna is well known, he was a General who is to give the signal for a battle to begin, a battle that he has been looking forward to fighting, though it is unsought. Arjuna has been looking forward to the battle but, when he has to give the signal for it to begin, he surveys the revered teachers and relations on both sides who will be killed almost surely, and suddenly finds he can't give the signal, and he doesn't want to do it. He then speaks to his charioteer, the Avatar Krishna, and he says: 'I have suddenly realized that this is wrong-that fighting and killing people is wrong-and I don't want to take any part in this. It is better for me to be killed unresisting on the battlefield than to take part in such a sin. It is true that there are people on the other side who don't recognize it as a sin, but although they do not, I do. I should not take part in the battle.' And Krishna hears these words and he gives a little smile. The little smile means: 'You use the words of the wise, but you are not wise. They are not an expression of wisdom in you; you are simply quoting these words in order to get out of doing something which you suddenly find you don't want to do. The wise are not overcome with grief and sorrow and delusion as you are now. You are using these apparently wise and spiritual words in order to get out of your responsibility.'

Keywords: Morality, Srimad Bhagavad Gita, life, living style

Introduction

The above is an example; Arjuna is suddenly making up a new philosophy of his own, quite inappropriate to his circumstances. Another example was given by a great modern teacher, a disciple of Dr. Shastri, who wrote: 'Now to the second possible query. It is sure to have something to do with 'not working for results'. This idea, one might almost call it 'this inhibition' arises from a misconception of the words of Shri Krishna to his pupil in the Bhagavad Gita. He says: 'Thy right is to the work, never to its fruit, therefore let not the fruit of thine action be thy motive, nor take refuge in inaction. The Lord does not say that a man should never work for results, but only that he should not consider that he has a right to them.'

There is a basis for the Gita revelations and that is within a man there is a god, the same god in all men. 'He sees who sees the same lord standing equally in all the beings-the undying in the dying'. The process is gradually to set free-to clarify the obscured God-head, which at the moment is concealed.

God conceals himself by his own *maya*. He has himself entered into the beings as the God of their heart and he has concealed himself, to some extent, by his own *maya*-the process of yoga is freeing completely from the divine illusion of *maya*.

It has been said, by western critics, that the morality of the Gita, like the morality of most Indian schools, is rather negative, and it is thought that somehow western morality is much more positive. They will quote the Sermon on the

Mount: 'Do to others as you would they do to you, this is the law and the prophets.' Whereas the Indian morality is much closer to that of the great Rabbi Hillel, contemporary of Jesus, whose view was: 'Do not do to others what you would not want them to do to you, that is the law and the prophets.'

The greater part of the morality of the Gita consists in not doing harm. The morality which consists in doing to others as one would like them to do to him can be unsatisfactory because tastes differ. We can see in Gita that sometimes there are great blocks of characteristics which have to be acquired by effort. For instance, Chapter 2 Verse 55 is about the one who is stabilizing his knowledge and who is practicing *Samadhi* meditation. This is the profoundest meditation, where there is nothing but the object of meditation in consciousness, and Sankara explains these verses: 'He who is independent of praise and blame, of the desirable and the undesirable of whatever happens, and who thinks of the Self alone, and turns his mind to the Self alone-he is one in whom wisdom is becoming established.' It is a course Sankara explains in his introduction to the chain of verses; first, the arousal of *Jnana* (Knowledge), and then its stabilization. This is someone who has *Jnana* and this has to be matured and established in most cases. Again, in chapter 12 verse 13: 'He who hates no single being, who is friendly and compassionate to all, he is my beloved... my beloved devotee.' There is a whole chain of verses from verse 13 to the end of the chapter, but Sankara, in his introduction, says these verses apply to the *Samnyasin* who has renounced everything and they are the

establishment (*Nishtha*) of *Samyagdarshana* or right vision. That is to say he has knowledge and it has to be established. He says this at the beginning of the verses and he will say this when he sums up at the beginning of the next chapter, chapter 13. Looking back over the verses that conclude the last chapter, he calls them *Jnana-nishtha*. '*Friendly and compassionate to all*', he explains as '*doing no harm to them*', and this is, in fact, an individual who does not have undertakings in the world.

The yogic view is that by far the greatest proportion of human suffering is created by human beings behaving cruelly to each other. Take the case of the Black Death plague in the middle Ages, which was one of the greatest natural disasters ever experienced by humanity; it killed 20 million people-about a third of the population of Europe. But in this century the first Great War killed 8 million people; the second in battle killed 18 million people, and in addition, 30 million people died outside the actual battles. So the vast majority of sufferings are caused by human beings, and the yogic view is, that rather than going round after them trying to patch up the damage that has been done, the true and proper course is to try to change, through the methods given in Gita and other great scriptures and great spiritual traditions, the hearts of the people who are causing the damage.

Gita, in the verses around chapter 3.26, says: '*The wise man should not upset the minds of men who are still attached to cause and effect and feel themselves to be acting and agents, but he should encourage them to act in a dharmic or righteous way. He himself, although he has no personal motives whatever, should perform these actions as they do, with the same enthusiasm that they have. In his case, he is inwardly detached and he is not bound, he does not make any claim on the results, any personal claim to the results, but he is aware of the cosmic purpose and he performs the actions efficiently, but in that sense* (Gita, 3:26).

There is a list of qualities which can be cultivated by everyone and which will lead man to prosperity in this life, and will gradually free him from the bonds of this life for liberation. The first is the purification of essence and internal concentration and in practicing these there has to be goodwill. The general heading is compassion, but it is to creatures in distress that happen to be met, the point is not to go out and look for beings in trouble.

There are other, semi-divine characteristics to be cultivated, such as fearlessness, steadiness in yoga and knowledge, patience, and modesty (Gita 16). There is also a description of bad men, evil men, who are ambitious to achieve power and success at any cost, and who have this enormous overweening pride and arrogance. They do not admit there is any higher power in the world before which they need to bow, but think that they themselves are the only judge of their actions, and therefore they do as they wish. There is a revealing sentence that says: '*They hate the Lord in their own bodies and in the bodies of others-they hate the Lord,*' and it means that evil men can never be at rest or at peace with themselves because their conduct goes against what is deepest in them-the God that is deepest in them-so they try to blot out the awareness of the demands that God will make on them.

There are two riddling verses in Chapter 6 of the Gita: '*Let a man raise himself by himself, let him not degrade himself. He himself is the friend of himself; he himself is the enemy of himself.*' The one who has controlled himself is a friend; in the one who is not self-possessed the self stands as an enemy like an external foe. From this we can begin to get an idea of the morality of the Gita, it is not something imposed from

outside. The English translation of the word 'duty' is quite often used as a translation of dharma, which includes, for instance, the rules set down in the ancient law books; the traditions and so on. But the true basis of morality is inner inspiration, the inner expression of the cosmic purpose from the Supreme through the purified mind and body.

If we go to Chapter 18, verse 42, we shall see that men are divided into four types. These are translated as castes, but actually they are types, and are referred to as Brahmins, warriors, businessmen and *shudras*, or men of service. When this system of division hardened it became regarded as hereditary. A Brahmin was one who was born of Brahmin parents, and that was all.

What Gita actually says is that the people of these types are there through the effects of their past *karma*-their birth as determined by their karmic actions in past lives. For instance, the Brahmin is one who seeks after Brahman-God-the absolute reality, not the one who happens to be born of Brahmin parents. In the Ancient Laws of Manu he says, ironically: '*The Brahmin who lacks learning and piety is as an elephant made of leather-there is nothing there but the name.*' The true Brahmin was an inquirer, a searching character, who was engaged in inner purification and other virtues of self-control. The Buddha called some of his best disciples Brahmins although he was so against the formal hereditary division of the classes.

Now what is the actual programme of actions cultivating the Gita morality? Hints are given in many places, but there are specific instructions. For instance, in Chapters 7, 9, and 10, the Lord makes some declarations, which he says are instructions for meditation up to *Samadhi*. They are of the nature of something within the conduct of the aspirant and within the mental consciousness of the aspirant himself. Suppose, for instance, the aspirant is devoting himself to performing some *tapas*-austerity. Rather than thinking, '*I am now making an effort at this austerity*', he should meditate, sitting still, on the declaration of the Lord in chapter 7, verse 9: '*I am the tapas*. I am the austerity in the men of *tapas*, those who practice austerity. When he performs the austerity he should feel and meditate while performing it, even outside the period of meditation: it is the Lord manifesting austerity in himself, not that this is a personal attempt and, perhaps, achievement, but the Lord is manifesting it.

In the same way the Lord says: '*I am tejas, splendour of the successful.*' When the aspirant is about to have a success or is having a success, then he is to meditate in his special sitting that this success is the Lord manifesting through him, not that he himself is attaining success. The Lord is manifesting that splendour through him. When he is at the peak of success, or about to attain it, he should bring up this feeling in himself more and more strongly. This is the Lord. If things change, then he knows the Lord has changed, and he does not feel that he himself has fallen away from what he was entitled to-Again, strength. He is not to pray for strength, but to meditate: '*I am the strength, free from desire and passion.*' He meditates on strength in himself-he meditates that the Lord is manifesting strength in him-not that he himself is creating strength.

There are a number of other references to this. When he meditates on compassion he feels that this is the Lord. It is not that he himself is sentimentally compassionate, but the compassion is that of the Lord, and he knows that if he is to do something, then he will be free from the anxiety as to whether what he is doing has, or has not, done any real good or, indeed, whether it ever will. The benevolent compassion

of the Gita is not limited to particular situations. Chapter 9, verse 17 says: *'I am the father of this world-the mother, the dispenser and grand sire. I am the knowable, the purifier. I am the holy syllable-Om.* By consciously meditating on these verses, these feelings will begin to flow through the mediator, and he will become a perhaps largely unconscious channel to the cosmic purpose.

The main thrust of the Gita morality is that it is on universal and not personal lines. In chapter 17, three great pillars of the morality are summed up: Gift, then tapas, which means austerity, and finally *yajna*-sacrifice or worship. The Gift is not something given on impulse; our teacher can be rather ironical about, for example, some of the Buddha birth stories. Buddha-to-be was walking along a high place and he saw at the bottom of the cliff a starving tigress with her cubs, so he threw himself down to feed her. Our teacher said that the whole episode was based on cheap sentiment; the purpose of life is realization-God, not feeding tigers. The gift of the Gita is made to a proper person at a proper time and in a proper place, without any expectations of return, and in calmness as to the results of the action. We often see people who make a generous gift, but they generally expect some return for it, and complain if their gift is not appreciated or publicly recognized. These people make so much money, and they give a little bit back to charity in order to put a gloss on their achievements. It is not wrong to do so, but they have their reward. As Jesus said: *'They have their reward'*, and that reward is here now, momentarily, and it doesn't lead to spiritual advancement.

So the morality of the Gita is mainly not to harm people, and the positive side is to practice the ideals of calm self-restraint, general benevolence, and especially to give the gift of wisdom. There are three gifts: the material gift, which is part of Gita morality that must not be given in a personal way, the gift of courage, and the gift of wisdom. The gift of wisdom is not simply through teaching, but ourselves practicing and exemplifying Gita virtues, or some of them, and Gita calm and constructive attitude to life by practicing these things and spreading Gita teachings. Gita itself says: *'His services are greatest who teaches this truth humbly, without egoism.'*

Bhagavad-Gita Today

That was several thousand years ago, and today the Gita is found in every household in India and has been translated into every major languages of the world. Literally billions of copies have been handwritten and printed. (A few years ago a spiritual organization in South Africa printed one million copies for free distribution).

What is the appeal of the Gita? First of all, it is totally practical, free of any vague or abstract philosophy. Years ago, there was a yogi, who lived in a small houseboat on the Ganga river in the holy city of Banaras (Varanasi). He never spoke or wrote; yet every day for many years' people came to him for advice. How did he manage? He had a copy of the Bhagavad-Gita, and after he was told the problem or question he would open the book and point to a portion. And the inquirer would have a perfect and complete solution to the trouble.

Conclusion

It can say that, our own spiritual awakening will begin by kicking out of the nest of comfortable religion into a vast world of realities we had no idea how to cope with. We floundered around in the sea of our new horizons until one day we bought a paperback edition of the Bhagavad Gita. We

did not read it, we inhaled it. We were not reading the words of a long-dead teacher: Our own Selves were talking to us in the pages of that little book. Nor did we learn anything from the Gita-we remembered that which we had always known. Eternal Self spoke Eternal Truth. The Bhagavad Gita changed our life by giving us Life. Life that has never ended.

Nothing has ever arisen in my life, internal or external, that the Gita has not made clear and enabled me to deal with or understand. Yet it is not dogmatic. At the very end Krishna says to Arjuna: *"Now I have taught you that wisdom which is the secret of secrets. Ponder it carefully. Then act as you think best."* No threats, no promises, no coercion. It is all in the reader's hands. Even better: the Bhagavad Gita tells us that we can attain a Knowing beyond even what it tells us. And it shows us the way.

The Bhagavad Gita is a lifetime study, and it is extremely beneficial to read at least one chapter a day. Its meanings are virtually infinite, so that new things will be continually found within its seven hundred verses. Equally important is the Gita's ability to continually point us in the right direction spiritually. Further, it conveys to us the necessary perspective for success in spiritual life. Although it presents the clearest philosophical principles, even more it provides us with the practical means for cultivation of higher consciousness.

However, we who are English-speaking have a problem: we only have access to the Gita in translations. And, translators being human, none have produced a completely perfect English version. For this reason we have to go through several of the best English translations for a detailed study.

References

1. Betai RS. *Gita and Gandhi* (New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House/National Gandhi Museum, 2002).
2. Chatterjee D. *Timeless Leadership: 18 Leadership Sutras from the Bhagavad Gita* (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2012).
3. Gambhirananda. *Bhagavad Gita with the Commentary of Sankaracarya*. Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1984.
4. Gandhi MK. *Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth* (New York: Dover Publications, 1983, 59, 60, 232, 233, 296-297).
5. Harry M, Jansen K. *From Values to Action: The Four Principles of Values-Based Leadership*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011.
6. Van Buitenen JAB, ed. and trans. *The Bhagavad Gita in the Mahabharata: A Bilingual Edition*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.
7. Joanne B. Ciulla, ed. *Ethics, The Heart of Leadership* (Westport, CT: Praeger, Second edition), 2004.
8. Bolle KW. *The Bhagavadgita: A New Translation*, California: University of California Press, 1979.
9. Minor RN, ed. *Modern Indian Interpreters of the Bhagavad Gita*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986.
10. Rao PN. *Introduction to Vedanta*, Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1966, 102.
11. Scott Teitworth. *The Path to the Guru: The Science of Self-Realization According to the Bhagavad Gita*, Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 2014.
12. Senge PM. *The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of The Learning Organization* (New York: Doubleday, Revised and updated edition, 2006, 76).
13. Senge PM, Scharmer CO, Jaworski J. *Presence: Human Purpose and the Field of the Future*, New York: Crown Books, 2008.
14. Viktor E. Frankl. *Man's Search for Meaning: An Introduction to Logotherapy* (New York: A Touchstone Book, Third edition), 1984.
15. Warren B. *An Invented Life: Reflections on Leadership and Change* (New York: Perseus Books Group, 1994).