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THE ESSENCE OF BHAGAVAD GITA FOR MODERN MINDS: A TIMELESS WISDOM FOR SPIRITUAL AWAKENING AND INNER GROWTH

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ABSTRACT :

We are living in the era where everything is measured to satisfy oneself. The food is measured in taste to satisfy hunger; even happiness is measured in terms of materialistic possessions. This measuring parameter has created turbulence in the modern minds. The young minds of today are full of complexities and confusions emerging out of the given hustle and bustle in their daily life. Such confusions created a sense of disconnection to oneself and quest for spiritual awakening and inner growth has emerged in order to lead a peaceful life. The ancient philosophies and scriptures have always given a right direction to human life. This article unveils the teachings of the timeless wisdom of India which has always acted as a guiding force. The Bhagavad Gita, also known as Gita, a 700 verse, written thousands of years ago continues to resonate with the seekers of self awareness and provides a profound guidance on how to navigate the daily challenges and reach to their higher self through spiritual awakening. The Gita studies issues of righteousness, selflessness and responsibility through a philosophical conversation. It describes the conversation between Lord Krishna, who acted as charioteer to Prince Arjuna. It is considered as a set inside epic Mahabharata enables the individual to go towards the everlasting truth beyond self. It highlights the essence of this timeless wisdom of Vedas and Geeta in bringing a spiritual intelligence among the modern minds who are wandering in illusions and needs to explore their internal journey to get connected to themselves. Bhagavad Gita guides the individual to live both material and spiritual life in a balanced way by dropping the measuring parameter of happiness as well as satisfaction.

Keywords: Bhagavad Gita, Timeless wisdom, self-awareness, spiritual awakening, spiritual intelligence, Mahabharata, essence

BUILDING THE CONTEXT

One of the important challenges of the modern life is to keep a balance amidst the chaos. Finding inner peace is a new luxury of life because in this digital era, it can be easy to create distress and get disconnected from ourselves as well others. While the ancient practices offer timeless wisdom, they must be adapted in order to fit contemporary lifestyle. The contextual approach to holism is becoming the more attainable goal of human learning. It focuses on the fundamental building blocks of knowledge and awareness. The fundamental building blocks of knowledge encompass ancient knowledge and wisdom. It gives a pivotal role to emotional as well as spiritual intelligence for the better human functioning. The modern minds of digital era are facing various complexities and difficulties in their life resulting in conflicting situations. The quest for inner growth and self awareness has a timeless existence throughout history. The modern age needs to reach to higher self in order deal with the emerging perplexities of life through various spiritual traditions, philosophies and ancient scriptures. The happiness and satisfaction is not supposed to be under a measuring parameter of human wellbeing. Happiness is not a synonym to well being, there is a tendency to use them interchangeably. The inward looking is the ultimate wellbeing that upgrades the existence of the individual from material world to the spiritual one. In this paper I look at the essence of Bhagavad Gita, which come together with the Upanishads and forms the basis of ancient Indian spirituality. The ancient scriptures are the timeless wisdom which gives the opportunity to the human mind to understand their own self in relation to others in the society. The insight gained by examining oneself allows the individual to gain a better grip on themselves in order keep a virtuous behaviour towards others.

BHAGAVAD GITA: THE ESSENCE OF VEDAS AND UPANISHADS

The ancient scriptures have its base in Vedas. The primary meaning of Vedas is knowledge and is identified in two ways known as shruti and smriti. All that is heard by Rishis is a part of shruti and are perfect without human involvement in the form of writing and editing. The knowledge through smriti conveys its meaning through epics like Mahabharata, Ramayana, Kalpa Sutras. The Bhagavad Gita is a set inside epic Mahabharata and known as the knowledge of the Vedas in the form of smriti. Furthermore many forms of yoga in the Vedas are also referred in Bhagavad Gita. With such

historic aspects it is believed that the 700 verse Bhagavad Gita is a condensed form of Vedas and have the essence of Upanishads which are the stairways to Vedas.

THE ESSENCE OF BHAGAVAD GITA: A PATH TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING AND INNER GROWTH

• **Message : Redirection from confusions to self- realization**

The Bhagavad Gita starts with the words dharmaksetre and kuruksetre. These two words unveil the powerful message about the transition of mankind. The dharmaksetre is connected with field of piety, righteousness and the kuruksetre describes the field of conflict. These words describe the fall of mankind from the state of righteousness to the state of conflict and confusion within his own self. The dharmaksetre has reduced to kurukastre because of the tabulations, worries, stress and anxieties. The ultimate goal of Bhagavad Gita is the redirection of humanity towards self-realization and gets rid of the confusions. The main message of Bhagavad Gita is how to live both material and spiritual life and find peace and progress in many spheres of human activity. So this timeless wisdom is giving directions to the young minds of today to come out of the wars they are fighting inside themselves and move towards the path of inner peace.

• **Three paths of yoga : A distinct journey towards self awareness and inner peace**

The ancient wisdom has highlighted the deep rooted context of yoga, which assists in diverting our senses from all external objects and desires to the possession of the self inwardly.

The dialectic verse reflected the conversation about the three major paths of yoga between Lord Krishana and Prince Arjuna. These paths are as follows:

- Karma Yoga
- Bhakti Yoga
- Janana Yoga

The teaching of Karma Yoga for the modern minds gives the importance to the efforts without expecting the results. Even in verse 47 of chapter 2 Lord Krishna says,

“You have a right to perform your prescribed duty, but you are not entitled to the fruits of action. Never consider yourself the cause of the results of your activities, and never be attached to not doing your duty”(Prabhupada, 2021, pp. 119-120).

The karma yoga suggests the individual to give best of their efforts without getting attached to the results because effort is the ultimate base to grow internally. Our thinking leads to desires and the actions follows that desire. So it is important to have a balanced intellect which leads to spiritual-centric work. In the light of the above in the verse 53 of chapter 2 Lord Krishna says,

”When mind is no longer disturbed in conflicting situations and when it remains undistracted, you will attain the yoga”(Prabhupada, 2021, pp. 125-126).

So according to Lord Krishna, all confusions and conflicts arising in our minds are due to lack of a balanced intellect which is why the modern minds need to have control over mind through self awareness.

The bhakti yoga teaches the individual to be kind to all living entities by surrendering ego and enhancing love as well as dedication. The janana yoga involves managing mind, removing fear and doubts by questioning the true inner and outer- self. The Geeta is a timeless spiritual classic and a path of spiritual emancipation. The Karma, Dharma and Bhakti are the three principles of spiritual dimensions of life. So these paths of yoga address the universal concerns of mankind. Reconsidering such paths of inner growth provides a more rebound strategy to deal with challenging modern world. By considering such situations in verse 12 of chapter 12 Lord Krishna says,

“If you cannot take to this practice, then engage yourself in the cultivation of knowledge. Better than Knowledge, however, is meditation, and better than meditation is renunciation of the fruits of action, for by such renunciation one can attain peace of mind”(Prabhupada, 2021, pp. 547-548).

The above quote unveils the importance of detachment from the outer world and inner peace by staying in a world inclined towards achievement and material success. it states that it is better to cultivate knowledge because it will gradually lead to the point of meditation in such a way that the individual will perform his/her duties selflessly and will give up the fruits of his work.

• **Knowledge of life: A great Virtue**

According to Bhagavad gita Knowledge is considered as the great virtue and through understanding the difference between perishable and imperishable things equates the knowledge with wisdom. In the given context in the verse 10 of chapter 15 Lord Krishna says,

“The foolish cannot understand how a living entity can quit his body, nor can they understand what sort of body he enjoys under the spell of the modes of nature. But one whose eyes are trained in knowledge can see all this”(Prabhupada, 2021, pp. 633). The above quote states that the knowledge of differentiation between the perishable and imperishable things is the real wisdom. Those who are spiritually awakened can see that the body is different from the soul. They are free from conditional enjoyments as well as illusions. The ones fooled by desires and lust lose all powers to comprehend and stays in the same materialistic body. So the modern minds are required to develop a sense that the materialistic existence has a temporary phase and the wisdom lies in the power of inner eyes looking for inner strength.

• **Emotional Regulation: A state of satisfaction**

According to the timeless wisdom, a wise man is characterized by lack of negative emotions and extremely high positive emotions. Wisdom is about maintaining balance between the two by considering them similar to each other. It helps the individual to have a state of satisfaction and be selfless.

• **Self-contentedness: A path of unlimited happiness**

The Bhagavad Geeta teaches the individual to be self-assured and never be dependent upon others. This shows the importance of outer detachments in order to enjoy unlimited happiness. In the light of this thought in verse 21 of chapter 5 Lord Krishna says,

“Such a liberated person is not attracted to material sense pleasure but is always in trance, enjoying the pleasure within. In this way the self-realized person enjoys unlimited happiness, for he concentrates on the supreme” (Prabhupada, 2021, p. 259).

The Above quote describes that those who are not attached to material pleasures always enjoys the pleasure within and such people will never be dependent upon others for their happiness because they contented with their inner self. The modern minds are inclined towards the material possessions and consider it as a measuring parameter of wellbeing. The Bhagavad Gita teaches the young generation to be self-contented by enriching their inner passions and enjoy unlimited happiness.

- **Compassion and sacrifice: A path of progress**

Compassion and sacrifice are the two qualities of wise person. The Bhagavad Gita teaches the individual to stay compassionate in this materialistic world. The wise person never harm others and stay kind to them.

In the given context in verse 1 of chapter 16 the supreme personality of Godhead said:

“Fearlessness; purification of one’s existence, cultivation of spiritual knowledge; charity; self control; performance of sacrifice; study of Vedas; austerity; simplicity; nonviolence; truthfulness; freedom from anger; renunciation; tranquillity; aversion to faultfinding; compassion for living entities; freedom from covetousness; gentleness; modesty; steady determination; vigor; forgiveness; fortitude; cleanliness; and freedom from envy and from the passion of honor- these transcendental qualities, o son, Bharata, belong to godly men endowed with divine nature” (Prabhupada, 1986, pp. 648).

The above quote describes that the person performing the activities in the mode of goodness are considered auspicious and lead them to the path of progress and the ones ignoring such activities will have a downfall.

So this timeless wisdom promotes kindness and sacrifice as a base in order to excel in their life.

- **Love and Faith in God: An important Emphasis on spiritual dimension**

The Bhagavad Gita is a religious text which dwells the close connections between wisdom and faith in God. Meditation and Spiritual exercise are considered as a way to control the mind. The spiritual dimension of this timeless wisdom gives importance to meditation in order to get spiritually awakened and maintain harmony as well as peace within. Even in verse 61 of chapter 2 Lord Krishna says,

“One who restrains his senses, keeping them under full control, and fixes his consciousness upon me, is known as a man of steady intelligence”(Prabhupada, 1986, pp. 133).

The above quote describes the importance of faith in the divine power for the modern world in order to get control over their senses. For spiritual awakening, an individual needs to meditate daily because it will develop a close connection with the ultimate divine.

- **Insight : A critical Element of wisdom**

According to Bhagavad Geeta, a wise person is always aware of his limitations in this universe at large. Humility is one of critical base of wisdom. In the light of the above context in verse 53 of chapter 18 Lord Krishna says,

“ Being purified by his intelligence and controlling the mind with determination, giving up the objects of sense gratification, being free from attachment and hatred, one who lives in secluded place, who eats little, who controls his body, mind and power of speech, who is always in trance and who is detached, free from false ego, false strength, false pride, lust, anger and acceptance of material things, free from false proprietorship and peaceful- such a person is certainly elevated to the positions of self- realization”(Prabhupada, 1986, pp. 728).

The above quote highlights the importance of the sense of detachment in the life of today. It teaches the modern minds that the one who becomes the controller of the mind and free from attachments has no concept of bodily life and will not make his body fat and strong by material things. The materialistically detached individual becomes peaceful and reaches the stage of self- realization. It develops the insight of the individual about the importance of inner hunger for progressive knowledge.

- **Duty and Work: A circle of Karma**

The Bhagavad Gita describes that a wise man is the one who is devoted to his or her duty in the given society. The real essence of karma is doing work for the sake of work. A wise person work to discharge his/her duty to serve the society instead of for the sake of materialistic rewards. The work only done to keep person appropriately productive is considered as bad. It has described the importance of devotional service. It clarifies what a man ought to do is not as a social being but as a spiritual being. A man is a product of his thoughts and what he thinks, he becomes. Negative thoughts bring negative results of karma and positive thoughts bring positive results in return. So the modern minds need to focus on their thoughts in order to lead a positive life. The real chain of karma can only be altered by controlling the mind which generates different thoughts. It teaches the individual to have control over his/her actions because what ones do to others comes back to them with double force.

CONCLUSION

The spiritual growth is ongoing journey that requires devotion and commitment. Blending the timeless wisdom with the modern spiritual growth offers a rich path to those who are looking for deeper meaning of their lives in this modern world. The aim of this study is intended to explore the role of Bhagavad Gita in developing the spiritual potentialities of those who are in war with themselves. By embracing this wisdom of the past and integrating it with contemporary life, individuals can cultivate a balanced life. Bhagavad Gita is like a clear crystal, if you place it on grass it appears as emerald. When it is placed on a red soil, it looks like a ruby and if the same crystal placed in the sky it shines like a sapphire. It is more like a timeless wisdom because its every word has a hidden meaning where end of one starts a new inning.

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