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## ETHICAL TEACHING OF BHAGAVADA GITA AND ITS RELEVANCE IN MODERN TIMES

**Buddhiswar Haldar**

Senior Research Fellow

Department of Philosophy

University of North Bengal

West Bengal, India

Today human society is in the era of globalization. Men have achieved the zenith of development in every side. At the same time rampant corruption, violence etc are increasing day by day. Society is facing the problem of moral degradation. The sense of Human values is gradually decreasing. People are striving for enhancement of human values as well as morality. In this regards while we are taking of all these at the same time the relevance of ethical teaching of the Bhagavada Gîtâ is much more essential to apply our day to day life. In this paper an attempt is made to the highlight the fundamental concept of the ethical teaching of Bhagavada Gîtâ and its relevance in the present day context. The cultivation of such higher sentiments is necessary in the present social order so to establish peace and social harmony. Therefore, its values have not lessened through the laps of time, which is a mark of its greatness.

The Bhagavad- Gîtâ is considered by eastern and western scholars alike to be among the greatest spiritual books the world has ever known. In a very clear and wonderful way the Supreme Lord Krishna describes the science of self-realization and the exact process by which a human being can establish their eternal relationship with God. In terms of pure, spiritual knowledge the Bhagavad- Gîtâ is incomparable. Its intrinsic beauty is that its knowledge applies to all human beings and does not postulate any sectarian ideology or secular view. It is approachable from the sanctified realms of all religions and is glorified as the epitome of all spiritual teachings. This is because proficiency in the Bhagavad- Gîtâ reveals the eternal principles which are fundamental and essential for spiritual life from all perspectives and allows one to perfectly understand the esoteric truths hidden within all religious scriptures. Many great thinkers from our times such as Albert Einstein, Mahatma Gandhi and Albert Schweizer as well as Madhvacharya, Sankara and Ramanuja from bygone ages have all contemplated and deliberated upon its timeless message. The primary purpose of the Bhagavad Gîtâ -is to illuminate for all of humanity the realization of the true nature of divinity; for the highest spiritual conception and the greatest material perfection is to attain love of God.



The Bhagavada Gîtâ can be said to be the essence of Upanisads. The Upanisads are like the cows, those bear milk or amrita and Sri Krishna the milkman, extracted the milk or amrita from these cows or Upanisads and distributed it to the wise ones are seekers after higher knowledge. Form this it is evident that the Bhagavada Gîtâ is a condensed form of all Upanisads teaches the supreme knowledge of Bhraman.

The teaching of Bhagavada Gîtâ is divine, synthetic and universal. It teaches theism and regards God as the supreme and the perfect person (Purusuttama). It is a synthetic universal message of the supreme spirit and it harmonized all the contradictory views and doctrine of different religious sects and practices. Here Arjuna can be regarded as a spiritual and Srikrishna teaches Arjuna the unreactivity electing nature of the world and at the same time illuminates him with divine knowledge. Arjuna refuses the question whether action is better than renunciation and concluded the action is better Krishna encourages Arjuna to fight.

Krishna points out that it is not for us to abstain from action. Renunciation means absence of desire. War is taken as an illustration we be obliged to do painful work but it should be done devotedly and whole heartedly without attachment to the result. The ideal man of the Gîtâ is the niûkâmakarma. The Gîtâ uses the term yoga the sense of the union with the God. It teaches the path of union through work (Karmayoga), knowledge (Jñana), devotion (Bhaktiyoga). Action, knowledge and devotion lead to the union with the God. God realization is the highest good and it is supreme end of human life and is the supreme perfection.

Ethics as a science of morality discusses the rightness or wrongness of human behaviour as expressed in Bhagavada- Gîtâ through human actions. It studies the habits and customs of people expressed through action done. Ethics passes moral judgements on human actions good or bad, right or wrong. The Bhagavada Gîtâ is the outcome of the conversation that took place between the Lord Krishna and Arjuna in the battlefield of Kurukshetra where two armies i.e. Kauravas and Pandavas assembled. In the battle of Kurukshetra when Arjuna saw his grandfather (Pitamaha Bhishma), Dronacharya, his teacher, the son of the king Dhritarastra and other relatives who came to fight with him, he refused to fight with his dear and near ones. Then Lord Krishna had to teach and narrate ethical principle to Arjuna. Throughout the whole Gîtâ Lord Krishna tried to convince Arjuna to take part in the battle field.

The teaching of the Bhagavada Gîtâ become necessary in order to convince Arjuna to fight as it was his duty as a Kshatriya and as a general rule one should do

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one's duty without any other consideration what so even "Duty for the sake of duty" is the guiding principle. In the Samkhya Yoga Lord Krishna clearly stated that he should not feel sorrow even if his relatives were killed by him in the battle as soul substance resides in human body could not be killed. The soul is eternal, immortal and pure and being indestructible it simply changes the worn out body and take a new one. Lord Krishna again taught Arjuna that God is the ultimate doer and everything happens because of god's wishes.

The Bhagavada Gîtâ speaks of the spiritual virtues as the divine treasures with which an aspirant provides himself in his search for God. Their opposites for instance- ostentation arrogance, self-deceit, anger, rudeness and ignorance belong to those who are born to the heritage of the demons. Here is a graphic description from the Gîtâ of men of demoniac nature. They do not know what to do and what to do refrain from. Purity is not in them, nor good conduct, nor truth. They say the world is devoid of truth, without moral basis and without a God.

*Gîtâ* has been regarded as one of the most important scripture in Indian literature. Hence, most of the eminent philosopher's in India have commented upon *Gîtâ* and tried to propagate their own views, through it. Thus a wide difference of opinion is seen relating the central teaching of *Gîtâ*. Some persons think that it presents different paths without synthesizing them. But such persons forget that if it is so, there was no need of *Gîtâ* after *Upanishad*. Again, the aim of *Bhagavada Gîtâ* was to show a definite and clear path to Arjuna and he admitted that after hearing *Gîtâ* all his doubts have been removed. Then how can it be said that *Gîtâ* has no central teaching? It is, however, true that *Gîtâ* has not established any of the three paths of knowledge, devotion and actions as superior than others. *Gîtâ* presents the path of *Niskam Karmayoga* in which the knowledge, devotion and action are synthesized and the intellect, emotion and will attain their highest culmination. This *Niskam Karmayoga* is the central teaching of *Gîtâ*. Its meaning, however, requires a clarification. But before the discussion of this central teaching of *Gîtâ* it is relevant to critically discuss the various views of different philosophers, regarding the central teaching of *Gîtâ*. Here, it has been highlighted some modern and classical Indian thinker's doctrine about the ethical teaching of *Bhagavada Gîtâ*.

According to Samkara the central teaching of *Bhagavada Gîtâ* is knowledge. Samkara does not emphasize action and devotion as necessary for knowledge and maintains them as subordinate to it. According to him one can attain liberation only by the knowledge of Reality. On the other hand, Ramanuja maintains that devotion is



better than knowledge and action and later is not essential for the former. According to the Madhawacharya also devotion is the central teaching of Gîtâ. Ballabhacharya had also advocated this view and so is the view of Nimbarkacharya as well. Mahatma Gandhi has emphasized devotion, but laid excessive emphasis on the moral values. All this views either emphasis knowledge or devotion. B.G.Tilak the author of Gîtâ *Rahasya*, maintains that Karma Yoga as the central teaching of Gîtâ and subordinates both knowledge and devotion to action. Like Sri Aurobindo, Tilak occupies a place among the foremost commentators on Gîtâ.

To support his view regarding the central teaching of Gîtâ, Tilak in his Gîtâ *Rahasya* quotes a verse from Nyâya Philosophy meaning, “The beginning and the end, the occasional repetition, the novelty of the subject, the immediate result of the work, the subsidiary matter and finally the argumentation in support, are the seven ways of determining the aim of a particular work.” According to Tilak in Gîtâ all these speak in favour of activism.

Gîtâ teaches us to about Niskamakarma. Man by his very nature cannot remain without action as inaction means death. Action is better than inaction. The ethics of Bhagavada Gîtâ has highly impact on human society. Because Bhagavada Gîtâ urges man to perform his allotted duty for the sake of duty without any attachment which is called niskamakarma. Ethics is principally concerned with conduct, which is in turn guided by pious will or impious will. The impious will lead to unrighteousness conduct and produces evil, whereas the pious will leads to righteous conduct and is conducive to the highest good. With the help of ethical discipline one suppresses unrighteousness and stimulates righteousness.

The ethics of Bhagavada Gîtâ has a great role in moulding our present unstable society where we find lust, corruption, inhumanity, violence and so on to a new civilised society where people provide their life with truthfulness. The Bhagavada Gîtâ teaches us to be soul conscious by being uplifting our moralities and humanities instead of being body consciousness. According to Bhagavada Gîtâ the ‘three gate ways of hell’ leading to the of the soul are lust, wrath, greed and the five cardinal virtues are like; purity, self-control, detachment, truth and non-violence are called universal virtues. If people follow the ethics of Bhagavada Gîtâ whole heartedly to get rid of from crimes, violence, corruption and other negative attitudes, the present society will be a society of celestial peace and happiness. Being follower of the ethics of Bhagavada Gîtâ Mahatma Gandhi becomes a nobleman in the heart of people of the world. By means of his non-violence and truthfulness learnt by Gîtâ, India under his leadership secured



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his political freedom from alien rule.

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