Review

Relevance of Bhagavad Gita to the postmodern era

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Bhagavad Gita is not only the Holy religious book of the Hindus but it possesses eternal value and universal unity in its applicability as it contains the entire message to the world. Its message continues to be as fresh and inspiring today giving bliss to each and every one. It is the Holy guide to the entire universe to rectify the errors, to self-analyze the sins committed by us. It depicts the essence of ancient traditional texts of India, the Vedas, and the Upanishads. Today we are living in a society full of conflicts, caste clashes and communal riots, jealous of each other, egoism, temper, revenge, complex, terrorism, fatalism, exploitation of women, which ruin the entire world and men lost their human values patience, nobility, affection, love, only craving for money. Reading and learning, practice of the principles of Gita is the need of the hour because it gives solution to almost all problems, conflicts of life. The paper discusses about the human values, social morals, duties errors committed by human being and rectifications described in Gita. The setting of Geetopadesha is the battle field of Kurukshetra where Pandavas (Sons of Pandu King) and Kauravas (sons of Dhrutarashtra king) were ready to fight. Krishna becomes charioteer of Arjuna whom he has raised the pedestal of a teacher known as ‘Parthasarathy’. It also analyses about the characters of man and gives a clear vision for self-analyzing teaches dos and don’ts in life. It also gives about the knowledge of the yoga and its divisions acting as a symbol of universal unity. It also says to avoid the conflicts in life study of Gita is the need of the postmodern web era focusing the traditional literature of India.

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INTRODUCTION

The beginning verses of Gita is a reference to the Vedik text which clearly explains that “Arjuna got teachings from Sri Krishna who himself is Lord Vishnu and Gita has been written by saint Vyās in the midst of the epic Maha Bharata. It is the Holy celestial songs consist of 18 chapters. Before chanting Gita this shloka(holy verse) is spelt in India.

Paarthhaaya Pratibodhitam Bhagavataa
Naaraayaneyna Swayam

Vyaasena Grathitaam Puraana Muninaa
Madhyemahaabhaarataam
Advaitsamritavashineem Bhagavateem
Ashtaaadashaadhyaayaneem
Amba Tvaamanishandahaaami Bhagavadeetye
Bhavadevychineem

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guide to the entire universe to rectify the errors, to self-analyze the sins committed by us. It depicts the essence of ancient traditional texts of India, the Vedas, and the Upanishads. Today we are living in a society full of conflicts, caste clashes and communal riots, jealous of each other, egoism, temper, revenge, complex, terrorism, fatalism, exploitation of women, which ruin the entire world and men lost their human values patience, nobility, affection, love, only craving for money. Reading and learning, practice of the principles of Gita is the need of the hour because it gives solution to almost all problems, conflicts of life. Because of rapid growth of scientific technology, what's app, twitter, Facebook, e mail, internet, mobile, man has become the victim of loneliness and complexes, not mingling with the society but through scientific connectivity he feels that he is practicing the breakup of relations. Through Yogabhyaśa (practicing Yoga), the physical illness will be removed but the internal conflicts, the tyrannical features of the human beings will be eliminated by the study and reciting the verses of Gita.

The ancient guide to lead the happy life

The essence of life its importance the characters of the human beings are deeply explained. How to lead the life happily? It was taught hundred years back in Bhagavad Gita.

The setting of Geetopadesha is the battle field of Kurukshetra where Pandavas (Sons of Pandu King) and Kauravas (sons of Dhrutarashtra king) were ready to fight. Krishna becomes charioteer of Arjuna whom he has raised the pedestal of a teacher known as ‘Parthasarathy’. Arjuna surrenders himself unrestrained to the mercy of Krishna and implores him to guide him as his conscious doesn’t allow him to do the war with his kith and kin Arjuna symbolizes the Jeeva or the atman (Self-conscious) who needs guidelines to run his chariot of worldly conflicts through Paraman the Lord. Arjuna overcomes with all desires and attachments and surrenders himself and desires to learn only the Jnana or Truth by God.

Lord Krishna the teacher to Jeeva (Arjun) delivered a discourse containing 18 chapters which focus about all the stages of the human life. It leaves message to the living people and also reveals the eternal truths raising the social, religious, ethical, human values in the society and proudly known as ‘Kal jayee kruti’ and ‘pancham Veda’. Its significance and importance proclaimed by almost all the philosophers of the world.

Bhaja Govindam & Gita

The pioneer of Adwaitawad Aadi Shankaracharya glorifies Gita as

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The Prime motto of Gita

What is the prime motto of Gita? Universal Unity. Sri Krishna the Lord says

He who sees the eternal God in all creatures is known as Samadarshi. He treats everyone equally as he sees God everywhere. This vision is most important to the present society which is full of communal, religious clashes. For learning Gita, there is no age bar, and everyone can read daily. It is the essence of Vedas, the Upanishads.
dedicated to it and who has subdued all the senses, obtains this Knowledge; and having obtained Knowledge he goes at once to the Supreme Peace. The three qualities that are necessary for an individual to be assured of the Knowledge Divine are enumerated here. Faith, devotion and self-control are the three imperative necessities to be acquired before one hopes to evolve to a diviner stature. Faith (Sraddha): It implies to students. With much concentration, dedication, hard work if you study deeply the subject focusing 100% concentration you will definitely achieve success.

Shraddhaavaan labhate jnaanam tatparah

Jnaanam labdhvaa paraam shaantim

achirenaadhigacchati // 4.39 //

When we attain complete knowledge with full concentration and dedication, our heart is filled with silent satisfaction of achievement. No words to describe the bliss. Such persons are referred to as ‘Poorna Gnanii’ (a perfect scholar). For him, orthodox Brahmin and the lower caste chandal both are same. In that noble vision, he treats friend or foe equally, scold or praise, no difference, pleasure, or pain. Such yogis never react. Such people are dear to me. O! Partha they are completely detached from the worldly desires.

Eradication of Caste and spreading of equality: The vision of a true scholar is described as the one who is known as samdarshy (man of unique vision) see the entire universe as one. For him a learned scholar, the cow, the elephant, dog, and all others are exactly same and equal since he feels God is Omni present.

Gita is not just a scripture for intellectual appreciation. It is a positive pragmatic code to regulate man’s life and to answer all situations. ‘Look upon friends and foes alike’. Ignore both apology and honor, be indifferent to praise or blame. Such persons are dear to me.

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samah shatrou cha mitra cha tatha

maanaapmaanayoh

sheetosha sukhaduhkeshu samah sangivrijjat

Alike to foe and friend, and also in fame and ignominy, alike in cold and heat, pleasures and pains, destitute of attachment,

Tulyanindastutirmourni santsushto yenkenachit

Aniketah stiramatirbhatki maanme priyo narah ||12.19

(12th chapter. verses 19)

(Taking equally praise and reproach, silent, wholly content with what cometh, homeless, firm in mind, full of devotion, that man is dear to Me).

Society needs such people today.

Gitacharya was strict to certain principles. He says confidently that do your own duty with perfection and dedication. The term refers ‘Swadharma’ own religion or own duty also.

Shreyaan swadharma vighunah pardhartwasunishitat

Swadharme nidhanam shreyh pardharmo bhayawah ||

It is far better to perform one’s natural prescribed duty, though tinged with faults, than to perform another’s prescribed duty, though perfectly. In fact, it is preferable to die in the discharge of one’s duty, than to follow the path of another, which is fraught with danger

The reciters of Gita never get afraid of death. They are ready to invite death. Such a mindset they develop. Gita reciters, adorers believe that soul will not die as body may take changes but soul is eternal.

Just as a person casts off worn out garments and puts on others that are new, even so, the embodied soul casts off worn out bodies and takes on others that are new

Dehinosminyatha dehe koumaram youvanam jara |

Tatha dehantaraprayata prastratra na muhyati || 2 chap-verse13

Life is a continuous experience and people should ever be optimistic. In Gita, Lord says wise men lament neither for the dead nor for the living. The ‘soul’ passes...
unchanged in the present body into three changes (childhood, youth and decay).

Gita completely supports the workmanship. We have to work hard but we should not have expectations and ambitions. Our duty is to work. It is a moral for the social service minded people. We have to work leaving selfish thoughts and live for others. Work with dedication without expectations and results.

Karmayevaadhikaaraste maa phaleshu kadaachana | 
maa karmaphalaheturbhuu maatesangotsvakarmani ||9. 

Chapter 2, Verse 22

A person has the right towards action alone and not towards the fruit of action. The Gita says work and worship are the same. We have to create a humanistic social order.

Sri Krishna’s advice here is a call to the man not to waste his present time in imaginary fears about the future but to bring out the best in him and live fruitfully every present moment of his life. Thereby the future will take care of itself and provide the Karma Yogins with supreme achievement. Referring about sage of steady wisdom

duhkhshwanudwignamanaa suksheshu vigataspriyah 
veetaraagabhayakrodhah sthitadheer munir uchyate // 2.56 //

He whose mind is not shaken by adversity, who does not hanker after pleasures and who is free from attachment, fear and anger, is called a sage of steady wisdom.

Teachings of Gita to the Universe

Don’t be angry: Be kind to all. Desire gives rise to anger. If we lose temper or show angry on others the loss is only for us not to others. When we are angry what happens

krodhaadbhavati-sammohah-sammohaatsmritivibhramah |
smitibhramshaad-buddhinaasho-buddhinaashaatpranashyati

Brooding on the objects of senses ►attachment ►desire ►anger ►delusion ►loss of memory►loss-of-reason►utter-ruin

How to become great men ? The answer is

yad yad aacharati shreshthas tattadevetaro janah 
sa yat pramaanam kurute lokas tad anuvartate // 3. 21 //

Whatever a great man does, that, others follow; whatever he sets up as the standard, that, the world follows. Common people are more influenced by the living examples of great men than by the abstract teaching of the scriptures. So the message is follow the works of great men, Take them as your role model.

Classification of People and Self analysis

Geetacharya classifies people as per their character, ie. Gunas! The characteristics. We have to analyze ourselves. There are three kinds of people. How these three types are categorized? The Sattwiki, Rajasi and Tamasi. The Sattviki people or neutral by nature are the noble ones.

Luminous, free from evil and unblemished: Under the influence of Sattva the mind is steady and will constantly reflect on the Self. Though Sattva is thus the most Divine mental attitude, still it binds us and limits our spiritual nature. They never have attachments, neutral by behavior.

Tatra satvam nirmalatvatprakashak-manamayam 
Sukhsangen badnaati gnansangenachangha

Now the characteristics of Rajas are described. The second category is Rajo guni... the greedy, hypocrites with strong desires and passions and ambition and utter selfish moving with pride self-boasters- the egoists, self-centered, sycophants. Today we suffer from this type of people in almost every nook and corner sitting in the higher posts like V.Cs, collectors, doctors, engineers, professors.....destroying other’s growth, behaving in an arbitrary manner like dictators suppressing the merits of the fellow men.

Know Rajas to be of the nature of passion, giving rise to thirst and attachment; it binds fast, O Kaunteya, the embodied one by attachment to action. When the influences of Rajo Guna predominate, the mind gets full of passions.

Rajo raagatmakam viddi trushnasangsamudbhavam 
Tanni badnaati kounteya karmsangen dehinam //14.7 //

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The third category is the Tamasi. The Tamasi gives importance to the body. He prefers to be lethargic and lazy and likes to sleep always. Without doing any hard work, they want to snatch others name and fame. To attain promotions without any hard work, crow-catching …bullies We find such people in the present day sitting in the highest cadres too. Tamas to be born of ignorance, deluding all embodied beings, it binds fast, O Bharata, by mis-comprehension, indolence and sleep. Such a person
practically lives in sleep; he has neither any goal in life nor any nobility in action

तमस्‌वजानं विद्वौ मोहनं सर्वदेहिनाम्।
प्रमादालस्त्यनिद्राभिभयतःनिबधनाति भारत।।14.8।।

Geeta characterises Asuras (the demonical features of men) and Devas (the divine features) too. What are the features of divine people and demonical? He elaborates the following ethical qualities, if pursued sincerely, will contribute to the discovery of the Divine in oneself. Harmlessness, truth, absence of anger, renunciation, peacefulness, absence of crookedness, compassion towards beings, uncovetousness, gentleness, modesty, absence of fickleness.

Gitacharya says

यजन्ते सात्तिविका देवायन्यक्षर्कांसिः राजसा:।
प्रेताभूतंगणाश्चान्ये यजन्ते तामसा जनाः।।17.4।।

Yajante saattiviika devanyaksharakshansi rajasah
Pretaabhoothgananshchanye yajante tamasa janah

And he explains about divine nature of people as
tejah kshamaa dhriitha shauchamadroho naatimaanitaa bhavanti sampadam daiveem abhijaatasya bhaaraata // 16.3 //

तेजः क्षमा धृतिः: शौचम?ोहो ना*तमानता।
भवित सम्पद देवीमिजातस्य भारत॥16.3॥

Vigor, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, absence of hatred, and absence of pride - these belong to the one born in a Divine State, O Bharata. The twenty six qualities described above give a complete picture of the man of Divine State. They serve as a guide to all those who are in search of a right way of living and endeavor to become perfect. The second category people

दम्भो दर्पःभिमानलयान्य क्रोधः: पारशुर्मेव च।
अजानं चाभिज्ञातस्य पार्थे सम्पर्णमासुरीम॥16.4॥

dambho darpo'bhimaanashcha krodha paarushyameva cha
ajnaanam chaabhiijaatasya paartha sampapatmamaasureem // 16.4 //

Hypocrisy, arrogance, self-conceit, anger and also harshness and ignorance, belong to one who is born in a demoniacal state, O Partha.

Hypocrisy - Pretending to be righteous but living in unrighteous way of life. Arrogance - Pride in one's learning, wealth, social status or family connections thereby living in imagined self-importance. This leads to self-conceit. Anger - When a person of self-conceit looks at the world and finds that its estimate of him is totally different from his own he becomes angry over everything around him which leads to audacity. All these qualities arise from one's own self-assessment out of self-delusion and ignorance about the scheme of life in the world around him. This ignorance of oneself and his relationship with the world around is the cause of his revolt against his environment and the resultant eccentric actions. These types of people are called demoniac or asuric in contrast to the Daivic or Divinely described earlier.

Based on devotion God classifies the people: Four kinds of virtuous people worship God. They are seekers of wealth, the distressed, seekers of knowledge, and Gnani or the wise. The first three approach God only for gaining limited goals in the world. Distinct from these three types of worshippers, the jnani stands out with his self-oblivious, non-utilitarian worship. He has no desires for any worldly reward. His worship is wholly directed to Self-realization, to reach Brahman. Krishna expresses His deep love and admiration for the Jnani. Whatever form the devotee worships, the ultimate goal is the Lord Himself. The Lord accepts such worship, knowing that it is directed to Him only.

chaturvidhaa bhajante maam janaah sukritino'rrjuna aarto jijnaasurarthaarthee jnaanee cha bharatarshabha // 7.16 //

He wishes men to be

ananyaashchintayanto maam ye janaah paryupaasate teshaam nityaahiyuktaanaam yogakshemam vahaamyaham // 9.22 //

To these men who worship Me alone, thinking of no other, to those ever self-controlled, I secure which is not already possessed (Yoga) and preserve what they already possess (Kshema).

Lord Krishna advises to use sweet words. He compares that to that of Verbal Penance. If someone is offensive in speech, we should not retaliate. Forget it for a day or two, your mind will become calm and you will never retaliate. We should enrich the society by good work. The study of Gita helps to develop character. We should think that everyone is our neighbor and do everything to help and remove the sufferings of others.

अनुवेगकरं वा6यं स0यं रयVहतं च यत्।
स्वाध्यायायशस्यैः चैव वाक्यं तेषु उच्छय्ये॥17: 15

Anudwegakaram vakyam satyam priyahitam cha yat
Swadhyayabhayasam chaiva vangmayam tapa uchya

The greatest task is to destroy all anti-human feelings. Returning to Harmony Lord Krishna recommends yoga as the means to spiritual emancipation. Contrary to the general notion, Lord Krishna states that mere physical postures and breathing exercises do not constitute yoga; they are just the beginning of one type of yoga. Actual yoga involves harmonizing all energy—material and spiritual—with the original source of energy, the energetic Supreme. Lord Krishna states that meditation (dhyana-yoga), philosophical speculation (jnana-yoga), detached action (karma-yoga), and devotional service to the Lord (bhakti-yoga) are means by which a soul can advance on the path back to harmony. But ultimate success comes only by devotional service (11.53-54); other paths are only stepping stones to the attainment of that devotion (6.47, 7.19, 3.9). Today western countries are practicing Yoga which was elaborately explains years back in India through Gita.

CONCLUSION

The Bhagavad Gita is one of the most translated religious classics of the world. The beauty and the sublimity of the work, its eternal relevance to the problem of human life and its universal approach that helps us view the whole of creation as one must have been the inspiration. Lord Krishna systematically explains the difference between matter and spirit and provides a practical method for spiritual elevation. Lord Krishna thus helps us understand how ignorance and neglect of the spiritual dimension is the bane of modern civilization. Entire Gita stands for Global Unity to achieve “Our Sana Thana Dharma to establish Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (The entire Universe is One Family.) It should be read as text in higher education and spread to strengthen the unity.

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