BHAGAVADGĪTA- AN APPRAISAL OF SOCIAL LIFE

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The Bhagavad-Gīta, as the name implies, is a universal scripture representing the true articulate expression of the genuine cultural heritage of India that arguably has relevance at all times. The Gīta is a gospel of non-attachment, the immortality of the Soul and the ultimate freedom of the Self in the Absolute. It aims at the development of one's self-consciousness through different paths arousing the awareness in a gradual method starting from karma, jñāna, yoga and bhakti. It involves the sacred teachings on the all-inclusive inwardness of the principle of consciousness. The Gīta is a wonderful message of hope, consolation, peace and above all, the Divinity of man. It has answers to each and every problem of life, gives fearlessness to everyone, and lifts the individual from the depth of destitution and misery to the height of immortality and eternal bliss. The Gīta discloses the true ideal of man confirming to the status of the Sthitaprajña or the Gunātita. the finest apprehension can be found on its discourse of the perfect man as one who does not follow the course of the senses, but casts off all the desires of the mind and is satisfied in the Self by the Self . The individual in the society has to bring his coherence to his environment in the light of the hidden unity of life in the Divine. Though the stages of life differ in different persons, their Dharmas or duties in life are based on these stages of individual development.The Bhagavad-Gīta recognises the temperamental diversities among individuals and the consequent classification of duties suited to their evolutionary stages which determine their Guṇa and Karma. The Gīta, at the very outset, declares that the Ātman cannot be destroyed. "Know That to be indestructible by which all this is pervaded. None can cause the destruction of That, the imperishable. He is not born, nor does He ever die; after having been, He again ceases not to be; unborn, eternal, everlasting and ancient. He is not killed when the body is killed".

Humanity according to the Gīta, fulfills itself with the identity with the supreme self, in a negation of all sorts of contradictions in life.

the most obvious formal theory is that the individual in the society has to extend spatially himself to his environment in the light of the unity of life in the divine.

The Gīta is the message of the life Transcendent which embraces within itself the entire universe which is seen in it, in an altogether new light. Every individual can have this experience and even the wicked and the inner has a hope. "Even a man of bad conduct, when he worships me with sincere devotion, should be regarded as righteous, for he has rightly resolved. According to Gīta, perfect attachment is not possible without the knowledge of the ultimate unreality of things which one generally comes in contact with and which act as the causes of attachment towards them.

Gīta says that, there is no destruction of effort here, nor is there the production of contrary result. Even a little practice of this dharma delivers one from great fear.

Spatial Relations and Social Life-Structure

The question now is: can the spatially extended relations be made to conform to the social life-structure? Srimad Bhagavadgīta occupies a significant position among the scriptures available in the world, for, it depicts many characters that address the mystic of divine concerns within human beings. Having been emanated from the lips of Lord Krishna to Arjuna, the representative of a living being in general and to mankind in particular, it has a strong appeal of reprisal of one's 'I' ness. In its mode of composition the Gīta constitutes a grand dialogue between Arjuna who represents the empirical self and Krishna who represents the Real Self, Puruṣa or Brahman. Each chapter of the Gīta defines a particular pattern of ethics and sociology and can be said as a veritable source of spiritual life. The peculiarity of the ethics of the Gīta is that it advocates not only "Mokṣa" which promotes individual good, but advocates "Lokasamgraha" also for social good. Every incarnation of the Lord fulfils the three specific purposes clearly spelt out in the famed verse of the Bhagavad Gīta namely, protection of the good, and destruction of the evil forces and the establishment of Dharma.

The import of this incarnation ethics is that the incarnation becomes inevitable when the virtuous people as well as the righteousness are in danger. When evil is prevalent and subjugates the human goodness, there is a decline in the value system of people.

Ethics and Perseverance- the Dynamic Social Ramifications

Generally speaking, ethics as a theory of values explains social factors like righteousness, wealth, happiness, etc., as beneficial to social good. the perseverant classification of society in India into four castes and four disciplines - Varṇāśramadharma has given the theory of values a unique interpretation. at the very first sight, the intention of Gīta looks easy in its apparent simplicity but to maximize its deeper concern for social welfare and mokṣasādhana, one cannot expect any prescriptive conformity which can provide better consequences than that of Gīta. there is nothing better that one can do in his life than what is presented in Gīta and the consequential value provided will be at its maximum. Each chapter provides a differential grade of socio-ethical prescription. Hence it can be claimed as a treatise for the laymen and is a riddle to the Philosopher. It is said to be the quintessence of all Vedic knowledge – Samastavedārthasārasamgrahabhūta. This shows the significance of the Gīta. It says that all the Upaniṣads are the cow, Krishna the cowherd boy is the milkman, Arjuna is the calf, the milk is the Gīta and the wise man who drinks it enjoy eternal bliss.

In the Gīta divinity speaks to humanity through Arjuna, the representative of man. It is a priceless possession of mankind on account of its universal appeal to all persons at all time and in all places. Its purpose is not the establishment of a siddhānta, by the refutation of all other theories but is the synthetic harmonization of apparently contradictory views by bringing out their common or essential features. The ultimate problems of ethics are metaphysical as they deal with the reality of the moral order of the universe.

The Transitive Consequences of Niṣkāmakarma:

Niṣkāmakarma is the most distinctive contribution of Bhagavadgīta to Social life. It is as unique in conception as it is perfect in its synthesis of the opposing aspects of moral life. The Gita theory of morals is based on a rational insight into the true nature of human personality and is intended to lead to the discovery and perfection of that personality. The theory of Niṣkāmakarma is based on the fundamental fact of the universality of karma. The Gīta says that, no man can remain still even for a moment without doing some work. Every one is made to act, in spite of oneself, by the qualities of one's nature .

The Gīta recommends ideal of Niṣkāmakarma that is the duty done for its own sake, not out of desire for, or attachment to its consequences .

Niṣkāmakarma does not counsel renunciation of all activity. What it recommended is not karmatyāga (renunciation of action), but karmaphala tyāga renunciation of the fruit of action). The Gīta does not ordain absolute inactivity, but only insists our unattached activity ie., freedom in action and not from action.

Niṣkāmakarma is renunciation of kāma and not of karma of the doer mentality and not of the need. We are asked to seek not only Mokṣa but also Lokasamgraha. But it appears that modern man, who is trapped in several economic, social, political, moral and emotional crises, cannot be expected to perform Lokasamgraha. In other words it seems that he can not afford this ideal, because he is entangled in his own problems. Even a modern man should regard Lokasamgraha as an ideal of his life. It is necessary for him, because, it suggests a way to improve the conditions prevalent in the society. the modern society has altogether discarded the ideal of Lokasamgraha for its seeming impracticality and unrealistic nature. but if rightly understood, it is a significant ideal even in the context of the modern society and also in future. in fact it provides the existential ground for a universal social progress as well as the necessary obligatory responsibilities for human survival.

The Social Ambience

The Gīta is no doubt a great exegesis of the ideal of social and universal brotherhood. It says: 'As the ignorant act with attachment to action, so should the wise act without attachment, with a view to promote the welfare of the world' .

No human being can operate in isolation. There exists a network of interlocking relationships through which one has to assess his goals and values in terms of the predicacies as a means of realizing the ultimate objectives. This, the Gīta says, could be accomplished through self-development. Hence the Gīta is the perfect friend of every one in the world. It says that "let a man lift one-self by his own self alone; let him not lower himself, for this self alone is the friend of oneself and

this self alone is the enemy of one-self." This is the most important message of the Gīta for mankind .

The ideal of the social ethics of the Gīta is Lokasamgraha, the well being and the solidarity of the world. This is brought about by each individual through the performance of Svadharma in the spirit of non attachment and self surrender and with the knowledge of the immutable nature of the Ātman. Svadharma aims at the same time at Sarvabhūtahita or the good of all beings.

The fabric of society is to be so constituted as to aid its members to realize the supreme ideal of life. As all beings share the one life which is the whole and of which they are parts, their development lies in their being in harmony with that Life. The perfection of the part is the unity of the whole. Mutual love and the execution of duty in loyalty to the whole is the means to the blessedness of the individual and the society. When each one does his duty without reluctance or desire in his mind, the welfare of the society is insured, for where ever action commingles with the knowledge of the Divine purpose that is behind this visible universe, there shall be prosperity, victory, glory and firm policy.

Gīta brings out the relative passivity of the personal obsessions that cause moral indignations. While concentrating on objects of the senses, a person develops attachment to the sense objects, from attachments desires are born, from desire anger arises. From anger delusion occurs, from delusion bewilderment of memory, after forgetfulness of memory the loss of spiritual intelligence and losing spiritual intelligence one perishes. In our day to day life we are facing the same real fact . In order to escape from this the Gīta suggests that we must bring the senses under control and directly destroy this lust, which is the embodiment of sin and the destroyer of knowledge and realization .

However, the most veritable eulogical argumentation that holds excellent merit for all times in this divine saga of life is the development by oneself. The merit of 'Self-Awareness', to be brought forth through self-efforts which make the self as true friend, foe, the beloved etc. Who giving up all material desires for sense gratification, lives free from attachment and false ego and sense of proprietorship attains peace .

We all have the moral capacity, if not equally manifested, and this must be utilized to attain the ideal of 'Lokasamgraha' which also has its consequential concern of individual mokṣadharma. The Lokasamgraha never will undermine the conception of mokṣadharma and it brings in adequate human solidarity across cultures in virtue of changing events and emerging world trends. So in this sense, we may say that the Gīta is a universal gospel. It is meant for me, you and for all alike. It has no distinction of sex, caste or creed. In as much as the spirit has no time and space, the message of the Gīta also may be said to be valid beyond time and space, which means to say that it is going to be a directive in our life at all times- past, present and future.

Notes:

1 Na jāyatemriyatevā kadācit
nāyambhūtvavāabhavitā vā na bhūyah
Ajo nityaśśāśvatoyam purāno
na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre. BG II- 17-20

2 Api ced sudurācāro bhajate māmananyabhak
Sādhureva sa mantavyah samyak vyavasito hi sah. IX -30)

3 nehābhikramanasosti pratyavāyo na vidyate
svalpamapyasya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt.II-40).

4 Paritrāṇāya sādhūnām vināśāya ca duṣkritām
dharmasamsthāpanārthāya sambhavāmi yuge yuge)

5 Sarvopaniṣado gāvo dogdha gopālanandanah
Pārtho vatsah sudhīrbhokta dugdham gītāmrtam mahat.

6 Nahi kaścit kṣaṇamapi jātu tiṣthatyakarmakrt
Kāryate hyavaśah karma sarvah prakṛtijairguṇaih)

7 Karmaṇyevādhikāraste mā phaleṣu kadācana
Mā karmaphalahethurbhūr mā te sangoastvakarmaṇi)

8 Saktāh karmaṇyavidvāmso yathā kurvanti Bhārata

9 Uddharedātmanātmānam nātmānamavasādayet
Ātmaiva hyātmano bandhurātmaiva ripurātmanah VI .5

10 Dhyāyato viṣayān pumsah sangasteṣūpajāyate
Sangātsamjāyate kāmah kāmāt krodho abhijāyate.
Krodhātbhavati sammohah sammohāt smritivibhramah
Smrtibhramśāt buddhināśo buddhināśāt praṇaśyati.
B G. II 62&63

11 Na karmaṇāmanārambhānnaiṣkarmyam puruṣośnute;
Na ca sannyasanādeva siddhim samadhigacchati. (B G III 4)

12 Vihāya kāmān yah sarvān pumāmścarati nihsprhah;
Nirmamo nirahankārah sa śāntim adhigacchati. (B G. II 71) .

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