

SYMBOLISM IN BHAGAVAD GITA

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Abstract-

Bhagvad Gita has ineradicable intuition in all humans' life knowingly and unknowingly. Sometimes humans fail to recognize it or realize it. *Bhagvad Gita* has spiritual and religious touch that guides the humans to how to live a life and handle any situation. It is said and believed that if one is not getting answer of the questions or having any doubt then open *Bhagvad Gita* and read it, one will get the answer of question or solution of the problem. But merely reading of *Bhagvad Gita* is not enough one has to read first and then need to understand the symbolic meaning of it. Symbolism means use of symbols to say something in different or covered meaning in layers. We need to identify the symbolism and then need to understand or decode the symbolism to clearly understand the *Bhagvad Gita*. Decoding and understanding the symbolism in *Bhagvad Gita* will make your reading worth. This paper talks about symbolism in *Bhagvad Gita* to get the clear scenario of *Bhagvad Gita*.

Keywords- *Bhagvad Gita*, Symbolism, Krishna, Allegory, wisdom, ignorance, good, evil.

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Bhagavad Gita has secured its place for more than 5 thousand years as the work of unflawed creativity, craftsmanship and unparalleled genius. This book of 18 chapters has acquired an unshakable place in the minds, and hearts of readers. It also served as a reservoir of mythological themes and symbols for the writers like: Emerson, Thoreau, Tagore, Eliot and it has left its indelible impression on the scientific minds like Albert Einstein. Impact of Gita on Mahatma Gandhi will ground my argument more firmly that Gita is able to teach lessons in almost all branches of life. Gandhiji took Gita as a daily guide to live and be a meaningful segment of the society. In the words of Roka *the Bhagavad Gita is predominantly considered as a work of ancient wisdom. (Preface, ix)*

Gita a spiritual, and religious scripture has attained the irreplaceable place in the firmament of classical literature. Bhagavad Gita suggests many things related to life with the help of its symbolism. Certain features of Gita make it an allegory of the journey Arjuna takes to harmonize his inner and outer self to resolve the conflict he faces. On minute observance many symbols come to the mind to facilitate understanding of a reader or seeker. It's symbolic significance enlightens the heart and mind of the pilgrim. At the onset of Bhagavad Gita Arjun tells Krishna to take his chariot in the middle of both the armies as he wishes to see the people fighting as his opponents. Here the chariot is symbolic to the world which has horses as human senses and shared by two a human Arjun and an eternal soul, Lord Krishna. The situation says that world is made up of both body and soul. Arjun symbolizes the world full of pain and misery and looks to Krishna for the remedy. Arjun turns himself into a seeker who is keen to end the pain of inner self. His counterpart Duryodhana in his pride does not pay heed to the need of harmony between inner and outer self and meet tragic end. Dhritrashtra an ignorant soul forgets justice and invites degradation for himself and his posterity. His blindness is also symbolic he seems to be blind in the personal, prejudiced love for his sons that he forgets his duties towards

others. Negligence of duties is equal a sin like inaction. Dhritrashtra shuns light to enter in his mind and confines himself to the low emotions severed from righteousness and he creates a fissure between inner and outer world. This divide bricks the way to doom. Horses of the chariot are another important symbol of Bhagavad Gita. The chariot of the world is driven by the horses of senses which is hardly a just and fair way to take decision. In the words of Sarswati the symbolism of chariot as *The chariot symbolizes the physical body and individual mind. The five horses represent the five senses. The two reins indicate Viveka (discriminative awareness) which allows us find balance or centredness between opposing pulls or demands. Pandavas symbolizes – good (wisdom) and Kauravas evil (ignorance). (mandalyoga.net)*

From another point the chariot symbolizes the physical world and two individuals on the chariot are symbolic to body and spirit wherein Arjun represents body and Krishna soul. As depicted in the picture there are five horses to drive the carriage. These horses represent different things to some they are the five senses vital for human existence- smell, touch, sight, taste, and hearing. But there is one more sense of intuition which is not represented by these horses. Thus, these horses represent five elements vital for existence of a body-fire, sky, earth, water and air. Wheels archetypally signify forward movement.

In the words of Giri *Kurukshetra is the personality- particularly the mind (intellect)- of the individual, awakened seeker for higher consciousness. (atmajyoti.org)*

Krishna teaches Arjun control the horses to decide the course of his own life. The Gita says if you leave your destiny on uncontrolled horses of passion you are preparing downward way for yourself. At last Arjun masters the art of deciding his own course of life. He stands up, fights and emerges as a winner with the help of acquired harmony between his inner and outer self. Failing on which Duryodhana in spite of having a great army loses the battle to Arjun. He has the conflict but he was not able to manage the conflict as he did not have a teacher like Krishna. He was not able to resolve the conflict and fought with doubts about his winning. He proved to be a bad manager who was given a target but he could not use the resources available to him to achieve the target.

In the words of Sharma *two contrasting forces have ever been active; man's eternal cravings for peace; and his abiding faith in the instrument of war to secure it. The wars he wages are both within and without. The whole message of Bhagavat- Gita- The Song Eternal- centers on the war that rages within each of human being- the war between good and evil; hate and love;*

greed and sacrifice. There is Kurukshetra, the battle ground of Mahabharat, in each of us. It needs the intervention of Super-conscious among us (Lord Krishna who personifies Truth), to end the war. (Preface, XXXVI)

It also appears that Krishna and Arjun are the two sides of the same self-body and mind, body and spirit, knowledge and ignorance. The outer self brings confusion but the inner self tries to eradicate the cobweb so he can see the world more clearly. It also enables him to define his role in the world and leads towards a harmony between inner and outer self. Krishna tries to dispel doubts away and *at the end the pupil's mind become peaceful (Saigal, 158) A desire to better society as a whole (Peel, 16)*

Gita in its lessons on duty towards world and service at no place separates service from ethics and ethics from spirituality. It is to be found in depth in Gita that it explains duty at a deeper level to achieve the final goal of life that is salvation. It explains life as an organic whole not like separate parts. Gita does not divide duty towards home from duty towards society. When people start taking duties in division a downward way becomes ready and this practice makes people diabolic who do not have compunction in harming others to fulfill their selfish goals. This division between private self and social self allows them to work in different ways on different occasions and they do not regret promoting corruption in social field as it benefits their small, narrow sighted goals.

Duryodhana separate himself from the society and carelessness for the world earns him bad name. He fails to discharge his duties properly because his goals were very narrow. Krishna teaches Arjuna not to fall prey of these narrow actions as they tempt but one has to master oneself to fight with the inner dark.

Bhagavad Gita preaches lessons in psychology as in the words of swami *the perennial psychology of the Bhagavad Geeta deals with analyzing and training the internal processes of the human being so that one becomes creative in the external world and attains a state of tranquility at the same time. (3) Gandhi thinks that the challenges that conflict offer purify one's moral stand. (Juergensmeyer, 16)*

Krishna assumes various roles in Mahabharat. In Gita he fulfils duties of a brother, Teacher, friend, mediator, diplomat, a politician, charioteer and a psychologist who very cleverly

carries out Arjuna's orders but also pays heed to his mental conditions and tries to give him lessons on various subjects.

Krishna, ever the greatest teacher, feigned outrage at these crucial moments- on one occasion leaping from the chariot in a show of utter disgust. (Hawley, 170)

Duryodhana when approached Krishna to help him in the battle of Kurukshetra ignored value of Krishna as a manipulator and politician. He forgot that he is managing his kingdom fairly and justly by managing all the diverse minds. He forgot that only a collection of brave soldiers cannot guarantee victory but a skill to move all the available force to a certain direction is more important. The complete force should complement one another to achieve the goal. Duryodhana's army suffered from lack of good management and there was nobody who could control and subside the internal, personal conflicts in the forces. Differences in opinions were natural but let them become a fissure in the harmony of the group was dangerous for the success and the end of the battle proves it.

The Gita teaches that *enlightened souls should master their senses, their impulses or emotions, which, if not controlled will often blur sound judgment. (Rosen, 111)*

This is what happens in the case of Duryodhana and his father Dritrashtra. They both negate the spirituality and do not combine themselves with the people around them. A multifaceted book *Bhagavad Gita* can give lessons in various fields crucial to management. Students of management know that Gita is a book that can give the entire lesson required to be a successful manager and achieve targets set for these students. It also explains why and how failures can cross the road.

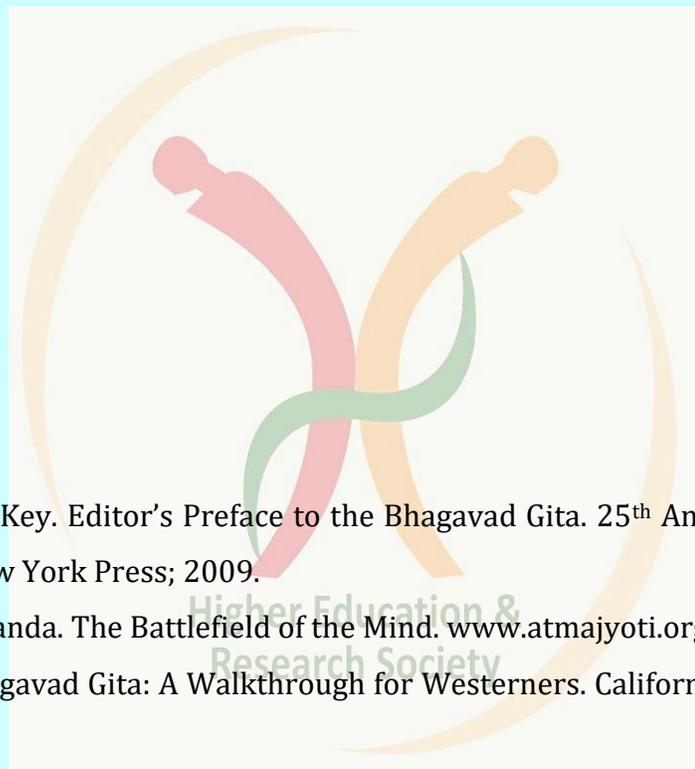
In the words of Bhattacharya *in the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna not only makes Arjun spiritually enlightened, but also teaches him the art of self-management, anger management, stress management, transformational leadership, motivation, goal setting and many other aspects which are now essential part of any HRM curriculum. (chillibreeze)*

Sivananda interpreted the Bhagavad Gita in allegorical terms as having a message for all. (Robinson, 97) This indicates that *Gita* has something to offer to everybody. *The Bhagavad Gita is one of the most studied and most translated texts in the history of world literature. (Chapple, XIX)*

Gita gives the specimen of wisdom in the field of food and eating habits also. It suggests that *one should migrate to those food, which are wholesome and pleasing to the heart. Foods that are too bitter, too sour, salty, hot, pungent, dry and burning can cause distress, misery and disease.*

And food prepared more than three hours before being eaten, food that is decomposed and putrid, is dear only to those in the mode of darkness. (Sankar, 19)

Gita offers something in every field of life. *Gita* is guiding people in different fields of specialization. *Gita* also offers lessons in specialized branches of knowledge like psychology, philosophy and management.



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