

# The Awakening of Krishna Consciousness

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## INTRODUCTION

The Bhagavad Gita is based on sermons of Lord Krishna to Arjun on the battlefield when Arjun is reluctant to fight the Kauravas. Lord Krishna by means of spiritual teachings is able to persuade Arjun to fight. He informs Arjun who was unwilling to kill his cousins on the battlefield that as a person discards his old garments for new ones in the same way the Soul discards the old body for a new body and the Soul uses the body only as a vehicle. There is no harm in killing as only the material body dies, the soul, which is eternal, reincarnates in a new body. He says that by nature, the duty of all human beings is to be happy so that he attains liberation from the cycle of birth and death and attains salvation. He further told Arjun that every person is born to experience pain, suffering and misery during his life time and after death, he is again born and this vicious cycle continues till he is finally able to Awaken or becomes realized and thereby attains stillness and peace of mind, and finally accepts his true self and becomes happy and joyful which ultimately leads to Moksha. This final stage is very difficult to realise and this final stage is achieved by undertaking infinite cycle of birth and death and thereby undergoing misery, suffering and pain.

Lord Krishna told Arjuna that every thing and every action of all life forms is divinely controlled and we have no control over our actions and whatever actions we take are all predestined, so we should not think of ourselves as the doer nor expect reward or become despair due to such actions. As long as we think that we are the doer we will continue to experience pain and suffering, so we should neither repent over our actions nor feel proud of them as we have no control over them. We should continue to undertake all assigned tasks without any attachment to the fruits of the activities. As Bhagavad Gita states, "You have aright to perform your prescribed duties, but you are not entitled to the fruits of your actions."

One should also not depend on anyone or any other living being. As long as the mind dwells on sense objects, self gratification, desires, lust, false ego, anger, greed and fruitive action, one is bound to suffer and lead a life of pain and misery. A self realised man has no purpose to fulfil in the discharge of his prescribed duties, nor has he any reason not to perform such work and he continues to act as a matter of duty without being attached to the fruits of activities, for working without attachment one attains the Supreme.

The ego is the main culprit as it desires success in all its activities and is the reason for a person's anger, hatred, jealousy, lust and longing for power. One should refrain from all things material as material objects can give temporary happiness and things which are temporary, can never give peace, happiness and joy. One should look inwards and attain inner stillness, peace and joy as it is where true happiness resides. A person is said to be in total control of himself when he lets go off any attachment to the result of his activities and is ever satisfied and independent though engaged in all kinds of work. When Krishna says, "nirmamo nirahamkarah sa santim adhigacchati", which means, "those without the sense of ownership and egoism attain peace", he is referring to 'aham' in an objective sense as egoism. Unless one is realised he will keep going into illusion and further distance himself from the truth and carry out all activities out of sense gratification. "The self-controlled soul, who moves amongst sense objects, free from either attachment or repulsion, he wins eternal peace." Any charity, religious practice, helping someone, done with an intention for self gratification will bring pain and suffering. One has to realise that all living beings are part of the Supreme then one will not fall into any illusion. For a person to be self realised he should never differentiate between hot and cold, friends and enemies, be equipoised in honour and dishonour, happiness and distress, fame and infamy and should be quiet and in total control of his mind and senses. One should never rejoice on achieving something pleasant nor lament upon some unpleasant situation. A controlled mind serves as a person's best friend and an uncontrolled mind is his biggest enemy. "One has to learn tolerance in the face of dualities such as happiness and stress, warmth and cold and by tolerating such dualities become free from anxieties regarding gain or loss."

According to Lord Krishna there are three modes of material nature-mode of goodness, mode of passion and mode of ignorance. When an eternal living entity comes in contact with the nature he becomes conditioned by these modes. The mode of goodness is purer than the others, it is illuminating and is free from all sinful reactions. Person in this mode are conditioned by a sense of happiness and knowledge. The mode of passion is born of unlimited desires and because of this the embodied living entity is bound to engage in material fruitive actions. The mode of darkness, born of ignorance, is the delusion of all embodied living entities. The results of this mode are madness, indolence and sleep,

which bind the conditioned soul. Lord Krishna said that whoever, at the end of his life quits his body remembering Me alone, at once attains my nature. "I AM the beginning, middle and end of creation." According to Vedic opinion, "There are two ways of passing from this world, one in light and one in darkness. When one passes in light, he does not come back, but when passes in darkness, he returns". Lord Krishna shows his Universal form in this material world to Arjun and at last Arjun is convinced to fight the Kauravas. The above is the basis of Bhagwad Gita in Mahabharat.

Therefore, the Gita has tremendous importance in establishing social harmony in the present times. as the root cause of social disharmony is the Ego. The various sources of social disharmony such as religion or caste based conflicts, cultural and ethnic conflicts, conflicts due to Identity Politics such as Extreme Right Winged Nationalism leading to wars, conflicts due to Inequality and Poverty, etc., all arise from the desire to strengthen one's identity either, by seeking a sense of pride/ victimhood by virtue of belonging to a particular group or section, which is nothing but a way of expanding the Ego, or individually trying to expand one's Ego by overconsumption and materialism which leads to unequal distribution of wealth and resources leading to extreme inequality and poverty, resulting in cut throat competition, increase in crimes, lowering of moral turpitude of the society as a whole and also ruthless exploitation of nature leading to environmental degradation resulting in disharmony between man and nature.

Presently, Social Media has become a significant factor in causing social disharmony as with the proliferation of social media the people have become alienated as they have become totally addicted to it and as a result whether they are doing work or in their spare time, they are totally glued to their screen. One can see people driving with their eyes on the screen which can lead to fatal accidents and not only are they putting their own life at risk but also of others. The tendency is such that people may have thousands of so-called friends on social media but in reality they are alone with no one to share their feelings, thoughts and anxiety. All day long people wait for likes on social media which gives them instant gratification and more the likes more they share their private life in public though it may give them temporary happiness but in the end it gives nothing but pain and suffering. "Happiness is a state of mind that has nothing to do with external world." These people look towards material objects for sense gratification which does not last long and again after sometime they fall back into melancholy, pain and suffering as they are constantly running away from truth and live in an illusionary world which is in total contradiction to Gita as Gita says in order to live a life of happiness and joy, we should go inwards rather than the outside world full of materialistic things. Inward growth is the key to happiness. Longing for material gains leads to social disharmony as it creates anger, greed, lust, hatred, jealousy, fear, violence in people, and they become aggressive and turn violent on a click of a button, or if they are unable to vent their feelings and keep inside them, then it leads to stress, strain and anxiety, which is a major cause of all lifestyle diseases. It is no wonder that young people in the age group of 30 to 45 are dying of heart attacks. Earlier people used to live in a joint family where members of the family could share their feelings, emotions, joys and sorrow and used to sit together and talk one to one. These days as it is people are living in total isolation away from near and dear ones with no one to share their thoughts. And the only way to share their feelings is through social media which gives them only pain and suffering.

The mind is restless and always waiting for the next event to take place treating each event as a means to an end and the mind is occupied with an incessant stream of thoughts. One thought leads to another and then to another and the cycle continues. In the twin verses of Dhamma Pada the enlightened Buddha says, "All that we are is the result of what we have thought; it is founded on thoughts. It's made up of our thoughts." A person who is so deeply engrossed in thoughts is bound to have fear, stress, anxiety and other negative emotions which further disturbs the peace of mind. Mind is very clever, it pulls people into negative thoughts which are sad, full of anxiety, fear and past history. Thoughts maybe of some past event, relationship, feelings such as if I enjoy, something bad will happen, leading to hatred, revenge, jealousy, wealth, restlessness, hyperactivity, hurry to do things, inactivity, no work to do whole day, laziness, etc., which are nothing but manifestations of modes of passion and ignorance as mentioned in the Gita.

To obviate overthinking or having thoughts is to be remain in Now or Present Moment. According to Eckhart Tolle, "The past has no power over the present." If people remain in now or present moment then there are no negative thoughts or overthinking and one becomes aware, alert, calm, happy, conscious and still. All negative thoughts and overthinking take place in the unconscious state, once you become conscious of your thoughts then you are aware and alert of the thoughts and one should let them come and go without fighting them. As Eckhart Tolls says, "The primary cause of unhappiness is never the situation but your thoughts about it." Same is the case with negative emotions. Hence, being in the present moment leads to subsiding of modes of passion and ignorance and one establishes oneself in the mode of goodness, as mentioned in the Gita. "It is through gratitude for the present moment that the spiritual dimension of life opens up."

There is always an ulterior motive behind every task people perform and that motive is very selfish as they constantly think if I do this, how is it going to benefit me in cash or kind. If a person thinks that the other person is in a position to oblige me, then only he will help him otherwise totally discard the other person due to selfishness. This behaviour again contradicts the Gita. Gita says do your work and do not wait for the results of the work. Just do it and forget about it and not think about its consequences. People find it very hard if not impossible to get rid of their ego, which is the main cause of pain and suffering, rather people tend to think that having ego is a good thing and look down on

people who have less ego and think that these people have low self-esteem where as the converse is true as people with a large ego generally tend to have low self-esteem and this causes them fear hurt, jealousy, hatred, anger, lust and other negative emotions. A person with less ego does not have to prove anything to the outside world. He is satisfied with all he has and is not greedy to attain more material things. Hence, ego forms the basis of social disharmony and again it contradicts the teachings of Gita as Gita says one should rid himself of his ego.

Ego develops when one identifies with one's thoughts, i.e. one considers oneself to be creator of thoughts and owner of them. Ego is the main culprit for negative thoughts and overthinking thereby leading to unhappiness, anxiety, fear, hatred, jealousy, anger, revenge and so on. Having an ego is the root cause of all troubles. Thoughts like why is he/she smart or more beautiful than me? why is he more wealthy than me? Why does he have more power, status, position than me? All are due to a large ego which leads to social disharmony. Therefore, to establish social harmony, ego should be discarded.

A person with ego feels himself superior to other living beings and has no empathy for other human beings, animals, birds, insects, plants and trees. He totally disregards mother nature and being totally shameless is cutting down trees leading to shrinkage of forest cover and is unabashedly drawing the natural resource and depleting them. Mother nature has lots of patience but ultimately it starts giving warning signals and a major signal is climate change which is leading to extremes of weather conditions and increasing pollution which is a major cause of disease and causing extra burden on the government. This is another cause of social disharmony and is in contradiction to teaching of Gita, as Gita says we should be in alignment with all living creatures as everyone has the same consciousness or the Supreme soul.

Human body tends towards male or female and therefore you are not fully complete, but you are half complete maybe in physical form or psychological form or emotional. When you are not satisfied with half complete form it may lead to unhappiness. If you have not transcended then you become dissatisfied. In some cultures if you are not married or don't have children you are looked down upon and you feel miserable for the rest of your life. Longing, emotional and sexual, even if you have found a partner, without spiritual dimension, will not lead to satisfaction. Those unmarried want to get in, those married want to get out. In absence of a partner there is sense of lack, and yet you can have spaciousness around the lack. Longing is there but it is not bitter. Who you are is not the unfulfilled longing and but the presence of stillness around it. If you are not trapped in longing it is also quite possible a change will come to your life, particularly if the intense neediness that I need somebody goes. Longing may persist but you can live with it. If you give somebody your phone number and you are anxious for their call but they will not call because of your neediness but will call when you give them space. You will not meet conscious people in the bar. Being should be deeper than the physical and psychological form. Therefore, this sense of lack due to loneliness and longing is a significant cause of disharmony in relationships.

All the above have contributed largely to the breakdown of relationships between husband and wife, parents and children, siblings, friends and other close relationship as the tendency towards materialistic gains has led to trust deficit between people and thus people have lost trust in each other and coupled with an inflated ego they think that the other partner should compromise and thus is a cause of more disharmony in relationships and further contributing to social disharmony. Gita says to love everyone without anger, hatred and jealousy, then only can one have long-lasting and loving relationships. The trust deficit has increased to such an extent that husband and wife and siblings are all jealous of each others achievements, which amounts to saying there is no love between relationships and with no love there can be no harmony.

Therefore, according to Gita, to establish social harmony, firstly, there should be harmony within an individual, which can only arise when one realises "Who is the individual" or "Who am I?" People identify with their thoughts and forms. Form is mind or body or anything which one visualises. By thinking or overthinking they form a pattern and subsequently they identify with these thoughts and pattern and their personality is defined by these thoughts. One should have no thoughts and should not identify with them. People start feeling proud of themselves by so called achievements, success, wealth, power, position, status, big car, big house leading to inflated ego and look down upon others and become arrogant and don't treat other people with equality and respect and have an air of superiority. These kind of people are generally not happy and in order to gain happiness they thrive for more success, power, wealth, status and so on and as a result become more unhappy because when you achieve them then you want more and when you do not get that, then you become more unhappy. Therefore, one should be totally detached from one's thoughts and should not identify with the thoughts. The "I" is the awareness in which the thoughts arise and not the thoughts themselves. This detachment from thoughts leads to dispassion and consequently harmony within the individual and in the society.

The dispassion or detachment from the thoughts can arise by living in the present moment or the "Now". Living in now or present moment means free from thoughts and overthinking. This implies one should have no thoughts of past or future, no history, no sob story or stories about your past success or failures, past relationships. One should be aware and alert of the thoughts passing by and let them go without fighting them. Present moment should have depth within

the body so as to say they should have inner energy, should not be in on a horizontal plane as one can easily get distracted and start having negative thoughts. Hence the present moment should be vertical that is deep down with inner energy so one does not get distracted. Being in now or present moment is awakening and establishes oneself in the mode of goodness as mentioned by Sri Krishna in the Gita. “Just hold on to the present moment attention constantly. All dualities that torment you get destroyed automatically.”

But how does one go about being in the present moment ? It is easier said than done and it may take years of practice to become awakened. According to the Gita, those who have undergone huge amount of suffering are more likely to be awakened, as it was only when Arjuna was in tremendous suffering due to the thought of killing, that Lord Sri Krishna delivered this sermon. A person with no or little suffering or having a life without any difficulties are generally not aware of the present moment and it includes the majority of the population.

The most important point highlighted by the Gita is the to inculcate the understanding that one has no “free will” and everything is destined as Lord Krishna says to Arjuna that all actions are divine actions and Arjuna should not feel guilty or responsible for his actions as they were never his doing and the identification of Arjuna with his thoughts and actions is the cause of his suffering. Even Quantum Physics emphasis this fact that life is predetermined, all actions and thoughts are predetermined from the start and one has no control over them.

When your consciousness changes, the world changes. When you realise that you are not at the mercy of external things which are happening or not happening around you, it's liberation. This liberation leads to harmony within and outside. The Bhagavad Gita suggests that if you think, “I am the eternal, universal Self”, and live accordingly, your actions do not bind you. However, “if you think I’m this person with this name and form”, and perform actions with that selfish and limited notion, they will bind you.

Hence, the Bhagavad Gita, by giving clear knowledge (Jñana Yoga) about the ultimate reality and the root cause of suffering, delivers one from passions and encourages one to engage in desire less activity (Nishkama Karma) (Karma Yoga), which leads to the dissolution of ego. This dissolution of ego bridges the gulf between people as man realises that all are manifestations of the one ultimate reality, leading to social cohesion and establishment of social harmony.

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