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Bhagavad-Gita: A Technique of Conflict Resolution

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Present study is an endeavor to find the solution of conflict faced by human as described in Bhagavad-Gita. The Bhagavad-Gita is one of the most important Indian Scripture that discusses all sides of life from the lowest to the highest. Current study explored Bhagavad-Gita and related commentaries to find the resolutions of conflict in human life. According to Bhagavad-Gita, there are four conflicts in human life viz. personal, social, natural and spiritual conflict. The root conflict is spiritual. It is found that resolution of spiritual conflict as a resolution of all conflicts in human life. Therefore to overcome spiritual conflict, it is recommended to sit for meditation at least for one hour every day, give up three things: smoking, drinking and eating meat, not tell lies, always tell truths, don't do harm to anybody either in thought or word or deed, and control your senses as much as possible, and brahmacharya.

Keyword: Bhagavad-Gita, Conflict, Conflict Resolution, Types of conflict, Meditation, Brahmacharya

Introduction

Life is wonderful gift of the God. It is also written in the Vedas that the physical form of the human is most precious blessing by the Sachhidanand. Alas! Human has forgotten this secret and struggling with life and attempting to find happiness in materialistic things and getting short lived happiness and that does not match with *Ananda* which is actually a man looking for. One of such struggle is conflict. It is interpreted differently by different authors. It is a psychological state of mind where a person is unable to decide what to do. Sometimes, people use this term as a difference of opinion between two persons or groups irrespective of their status in their life. Seldom, it is also called clash of interest. According to David L. Austin (1972), "It can be defined as a disagreement between two or more individuals or groups, with each individual or group trying to gain acceptance of its view or objectives over others". Louis R. Pondy (1938-1987) has given a very comprehensive definition of conflict. According to him the term conflict is used in four ways in the literature to describe:

Conflict can take on any of several different forms in an organization. It can occur within an employee, between individuals or groups and across organizations. Thus, the different types of conflicts are: intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup and inter-organizational conflict. It is important to note that the prefix intra means "within", whereas inter means "between".

This conflict has become so common in our life that people have made it business to earn money. There are number of workshop being organized at individuals/groups levels to resolve conflict in human life. Different theorists/scientists have presented their various models/techniques to resolve conflict in human life. Therefore current study is also aimed to find the technique of conflict resolution in Bhagavad-Gita.

The Bhagavad-Gita

The Bhagavad-Gita is one of the most important scripture because it highlights each side of life from the lowest to the highest. It describes the inner as well as the outer. It emphasizes the social, the individual and the

spiritual aspects at one and the same time. It is the only scripture which is able to clear every doubt in the world. That is why Bhagavad-Gita is not a Hindu scripture but a world scripture. It does not speak of Hinduism, but of yoga particularly, and yoga is not a religion but a science of life. Though it is written in Sanskrit and, therefore, it may be called an Indian scripture, it is really a universal scripture. The purpose of the gospel of the Bhagavad-Gita is to bring about a reconciliation between the visible and the invisible, man and God. Life is a conflict, and the purpose of the Bhagavad-Gita is to solve this conflict. There are eighteen chapters of the Bhagavad-Gita, and each chapter is a resolution of a different type of conflict (Sri Swami Krishnananda).

According to Sri Swami Krishnananda, there are four types of conflict in this world. There is conflict between man and man, there is conflict within one's man, there is conflict between man and the world of nature, and last there is a conflict between man and God. One hand conflict between man and man, and within man are visible and observed in our daily life, on the other hand rest two conflicts are not so easily observable. One can also name them as social conflict, personal conflict, natural conflict and spiritual conflict. The social and the personal conflicts are actually the result of natural and spiritual conflicts. These conflicts follow one after other in a sequential manner of logical deduction (Sri Swami Krishnananda).

Social Conflict (between man and man)

The social conflict is clash of interest between man and another man. Individual conflict is behind the social conflict. The social conflict can be resolved by mutual cooperation and performing ones prescribed duty for the betterment of the society. Lord Krishna (Chapter III, 11th Shloka) says that if we

nourish one another so one can attain the Supreme goal. King Janaka is one of the excellent examples who attained perfection (or self-realization) by only Karma Yoga. According to 20th Shloka of Chapter III (Bhagavad-Gita) one must do their duties with an apathetic frame of mind to direct people for the betterment of the society (Satpathy, 2010).

Personal Conflict (within one's man)

The Bhagavad-Gita describes solves this conflicts by the 'Law of Work' or Karma Yoga. Each one of us performs our duties and responsibilities with best of our knowledge and ability. Lord Krishna in 48th Shaloka of Chapter II says, Arjuna, forget your worries and attachment about results of Mahabharata, surrender your success and failure to me. This equanimity of mind is known as Yoga. The Bhagavad-Gita describes reorientation of our view towards the result of the work we do (47th Shaloka, Chapter II: Bhagavad-Gita). Bhagavad-Gita says, "Man has a right to do his predefined duty, but he is not entitled to the fruits of his action. Never think of yourself as the cause of the results of your actions, and never attach yourself with your duties (47th Shaloka, Chapter II: Bhagavad-Gita)". Man is given choice to perform either ego-centric work or spirit-centric work. Since spirit-centric work does not beget adverse results, so the equanimity can be achieved. Yoga is alertness in action (yoga: karmasu kaus(h)alam, 50th Shaloka, Chapter II: Bhagavad-Gita). Lord Krishna states, "When mind of a man is neither disturbed by conflicting circumstances nor distracted, so man will attain the Yoga (53rd Shaloka, Chapter II: Bhagavad-Gita)". He continues, "Mind is like a friend for individuals who have control over them, and mind is foe for individuals who do not have control on them (6th Shaloka, Chapter VI: Bhagavad-Gita)." Lord Krishna in 35th Shaloka

of Chapter VI of Bhagavad-Gita says: O son of Kunti, though it is certainly difficult to overcome the restless of mind, but it can be done by only consistent practice and detachment (Satpathy, 2010).

Natural Conflict (between man and the world of nature)

Bhagavad-Gita also describes the conflict between the individual and the world as a whole that is nature. Individuals have separated himself from the Nature. The conflict between Men and Nature is of great importance. We as a men live like a stranger in our nature. The greed of men has exploited Nature exceedingly. The day is not far when Nature is not going to forgive us, if we do not wake up now and obey its laws so men will be in danger. We are an integral, vital, universal part of the Nature. Nature is not going to vanish; however individual body will be decayed. Therefore Lord Krishna says, “Neither Kings, You and I cease in this world in neither past nor all of us will cease in future (12th Shaloka, Chapter II: Bhagavad-Gita)”. Lord Krishna in 4th and 5th Shaloka of Chapter II: Bhagavad-Gita says, “Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence and false ego – all together these eight constitute My separated material energies. Besides this inferior nature, O mighty-armed Arjuna, there is a superior energy of mine, which comprises all the living entities who are interacting with the material nature and are sustaining the universe” (Satpathy, 2010).

Spiritual Conflict (between man and God)

Next conflict is between men and the Absolute or God. We are alienated from God Himself or the Ultimate Supreme Power that has created the Nature. Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad-Gita (3rd Shaloka, Chapter XIV) says “O Bharata the total material world is called Brahman and it is the source of all

births. It is that Brahman or the womb called the Nature (Prakriti) where I place the embryo of life. Thence is the birth of all living beings”. Therefore, Nature is the source of all life and when we try to play with it the Nature reacts to it. The result is natural calamities and catastrophes of life. (Satpathy, 2010).

Conclusion

Sri Swami Krishnanada believes that the original conflict is between the man and the Absolute that is God. Lower than this is the conflict between the man and the world of nature. Thereafter comes conflict within man. As a result of all these, there is social conflict, but unfortunately man is busy in solving social conflicts without knowing their actual causes. Social service and social work, which are accepted as solutions to the struggle of life, are really not solutions at all. That is why materially and socially one strives to make oneself happy, but unfortunately man does not get happiness at all.

It is also commented by Sri Swami Ji that individual will not love each other ultimately on account of an invisible inner conflict. By social work and social service, people are putting effort to bring an outer appearance of mutual love among them, but this cannot be forever. Social harmony cannot last long because inwardly people do not love one another. On account of the absence of inner love, the outer love breaks at different times. Even best friends can also get separate from one to the other due to the absence of an inner bond between them. Unless and until there is an internal love, outward coordination and solidarity attempt will be of no meaning. Unfortunately man does not know this secret; that is why one is suffering even today. Existing knowledge has not helped us at all in understanding this secret.

One cannot achieve social solidarity unless personal, individual conflict is resolved because society is made up of a group of individuals. Therefore, it is difficult to attain social peace without individual peace. So philosophy of socialism and communism is in questions on account of this mismatch between individual and society. They cannot progress until the root cause is not identified and resolved. Hence, one can conclude that social welfare is only possible when there is individual welfare, and individual welfare is not possible as long as inner conflicts are not solved (Sri Swami Krishnananda).

Swami Ji, says this, inner conflicts are caused by a non-coordination of the inner layers of personality. Inner layers of personality are the conscious, the subconscious and the unconscious levels of the mind. One can be happy consciously, but necessarily subconsciously. Western psychology has limited itself only to the conscious level and, therefore, it has not solved problems of life. Human personality is deeper than the conscious level. Not only can we not understand another person, we cannot understand our own self unless all layers are known at the same time.

Swami Ji asks in his commentary, what is the reason behind conflict between the subconscious and the conscious. It can be answered only when we know about subconscious. The subconscious is a layer of impressions of previous experiences piled up one over the other for years and years together. These impressions are caused by external perception of objects through the senses. Therefore, the subconscious mind is made up of impressions of sensory perceptions, so our personality is result of impressions of our sensory perceptions.

Thus Swami Ji says, we have come to know that our personality is the outcome of sensory perceptions. Our relationship with the world determines our inner personality, and that determines human society outside. Sensory perception is contact with desirable things and avoidance of undesirable objects. The senses have two perspectives about objects. One is they are outside of them and the other is that objects are localised in space and time. One thing can be only in one place, and it cannot be in two places. This is one of the ideas of the senses. The senses are not aware about that things are interconnected among themselves. If senses are aware about this interconnection of things, so they will not go for a few objects of the world alone. It is said that the objects are

physical, external, as well as localised. But this is a misconception of the senses.

Recommendation:

The Bhagavad-Gita preaching, prepares us for living a universal life in this world. So the yoga of the Bhagavad-Gita is inclusive of social work, social service, individual peace, as well as God realization. One cannot practice it due to old habits. To overcome such old habits one has to do following things. Though, it can be difficult but not impossible. Therefore Sri Swami Krishnananda in his commentary suggests following actions.

* To find spiritual Guru/Master.

*To sit for meditation at least one hour every day.

*To give up smoking, drinking and eating meat (help in getting 25% of success).

*To speak truths always.

*To not to harm to anybody either in thought or word or deed.

*To control your senses as much as possible, conservation of energy, not hurting others (*Brahmacharya*).

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