

Identity Crisis and Intrapersonal Conflict Management-The Bhagavad Gita Way

*Dr. Aswathi Nair

**Assistant Professor, Alliance University.*

ABSTRACT— In these tempestuous times of business disruption and continuous change where individuals, organizations and nationalities wrestle with a sense of purpose and habitually thrive under pressure in a swirl of ambiguity; no individual or organization or nation will be able to stand the ordeal of time if they do not do a bit of soul searching.

Is it possible to have an intelligence that helps one to effectively manage one's emotions? Is there a dimension that does not change with the changing times? Is there a changeless immortal principle behind the changing world of events? Is there something to life which is beyond the identities I have gathered from Identification? Is there any meaning in life one can live and die for which is beyond the profit and pleasure principle?

It is in these crossroads of existential dilemmas of the Business world that the wisdom of Bhagavad Gita makes an entry from the battlefield of the protagonist of the 5th century BC to the battlefield of the board rooms of the 21st Century.

The objective of the study is to understand the identity crisis and intrapersonal conflict management from the premise of Bhagavad Gita, an enviable product of ancient Indian classical literature written in Sanskrit Language.

This research paper is based on a qualitative research analysis that encompasses an assessment, analysis and interpretation of literature on Identity Crisis and Intrapersonal Conflict management from carefully chosen verses of the Bhagavad-Gita. The methodology applied is called Vedic Hermeneutics. The topic is highly in demand and discussed across the C-Suite circles worldwide.

Keywords: Intra-personal conflict, Identity Crisis, The Bhagavad-Gita, Hermeneutics.

I. IDENTITY CRISIS

Erikson labelled identity as "a subjective sense as well as a noticeable feature of individual uniformity and continuousness, combined with some acceptance in the uniformity and continuity of some collective world image."

As per Erikson, an identity crisis is a phase of meticulous examination of various means of observing oneself.

The fundamental crisis of our times is the crisis of meaning, the dilemma of existence, the existential crisis. Individuals get into the mode of existential crisis, a set of circumstances that challenge one's sense of identity and self-image triggered by the discrepancy between one's inner spiritual needs and the existing materialistic weightage of our society and fall into existential anxiety, existential dread etc.

Individuals get into the mode of existential crisis, a set of circumstances that challenge one's sense of identity and self-image triggered by the discrepancy between one's inner spiritual needs and the existing materialistic weightage of our society and fall into existential anxiety, existential dread etc. An Individual should address the existential crisis and inner turmoil.

II. INTRA-PERSONAL CONFLICT OF EMPLOYEES

Today's Intergenerational workforce goes through different individual and family transitions and they have spent more time and energy at workplace to meet the corporate deadlines. So it's just natural for them to transfuse their personal battles and baggage to the lobbies of their workplaces. Workplace depression and a lack of purpose and meaning at work with moderate performance delivery is a commonplace phenomenon of today's workforce.

III. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of the study is as follows:

- To gain insight on the identity crisis and its solution from Bhagavad Gita for modern day managers.

- To explore intrapersonal conflict and its management from the premise of Bhagavad Gita through the analysis of Arjuna's despondency.
-

IV. METHODOLOGY- HERMENEUTICS

This paper is a qualitative research work that includes an evaluation and interpretation of work on Leadership and a detailed analysis of carefully chosen verses of the Bhagavad-Gita.

The term hermeneutics is a word originated from 'Ἑρμηνεύς, hermeneuo, means to translate or interpret. The term is an English version of the classical Greek work hermeneus. Hermeneutics is understood as interpretation, the expression derived from the term of the Greek deity Hermes as the interpreter of the messages of the divinities. It was used for the interpretations of sacred scriptures of the Jewish, Biblical exegesis traditions Muslim and Hindu traditions.

The subject of hermeneutics arisen with the novel humanist learning of the 15th century as an antique and critical methodology for the analysis of texts. Friedrich Schleiermacher identified as the father of contemporary hermeneutics has extended the subject from sacred texts deciphering and interpretation to all social texts.

Hermeneutics embraces the all-inclusive structure of the interpretive progression incorporating written, verbal and nonverbal communicate.

We start Hermeneutics by reading the text clearly with all the detailing and particularities and then use to text to substantiate the initial idea. Hermeneutics is not static at any given point in time. The interpretations we give to the meaning of the text keep changing with our understanding of our self and the way we connect.

When it comes to classical Indian literature of Bhagavad Gita where the knowledge has been handed over through oral traditions from the teacher to the student; it is very difficult to say whether the text comes first or the interpretation. The answer should stand for both. The reading process is an evolving process and keeps changing as per the mental composition of the individual interpreting and reading the text. Hence there is no ultimate conclusion for the interpretations. It serves as a base and stimulates further research and dialogue. The Job description of a Hermeneutist is to express the reflection of the mind to find the truth of the text without putting a full stop to the findings.

V. BACKGROUND OF BHAGAVAD GITA

Bhagavad-Gita translated as the —Song of the Lord“ is a philosophical work composed around 200 B.C.E.—200 C.E, had a case of a highly talented and good natured Arjun, the most outstanding warrior of his times, caught in identity crisis and lost his inner strength to fight his enemies in a battlefield where he has come face to face with his entire relatives starting from his grandfather, his mentors, cousins, his nephews being strategically positioned as enemies though he has previously decided to fight the war with the same set of group. (Bhagavad Gita and Management)

His charioteer Krishna lectured Bhagavad-Gita as a Question and Answer session in 18 chapters.

That's the background of the work.

VI. INTRAPERSONAL CONFLICT MANAGEMENT-THE BHAGAVAD GITA WAY

The immortal philosophical discourse of Bhagavad-Gita was delivered on the combat zone prior to the commencing of the battle. The eternal sermon amongst the Absolute Lord, Krishna and his mentee Arjuna, didn't take place in the comfortable spiritual ambience of a temple or in an ancient university which is away from the maddening crowds and inside a dense primitive forest or on the foothills or the most inspirable snow

clad Himalayan mountain nevertheless on a combat zone just before the commencement of a great historic war that had far reaching consequences and is documented in the classic epic, Mahabharata.

VII. PREMISE OF MAHABHARATA WAR

A brief historical description about the reasons for Mahabharata War is essential to understand the state of mind of Arjuna who is going through a cognitive as well as an affective conflict. The Mahabharata recounts the combat amongst two families of siblings; the five Pandavas and hundred Kauravas, both trying to assert the territory of Hastinapura.

The war was between Kauravas and Pandavas but they belonged to the same clan-Kuru dynasty. Pandu and Dhritrashtra were half-brothers. Pandu met with an untimely death survived by his 5 capable and righteous sons known as Pandavas who are famous for virtuous qualities like compassion, majestic presence, and incredible competency, straightforward and trustworthy. Dhritrashtra's son came to be known as Kauravas. All of the hundred kaurava brothers were extremely selfish, cunning, crooked, egoistic and doesn't care for values and ethics. Duryodhana was the eldest of the Kauravas and he indulged in finding diverse ways to harm Pandavas to secure the kingdom. Amongst Pandavas, the eldest is Yudhishthira and Arjuna is the most smartest and valorous of all the brothers. They have been dispossessed of their legitimacy to the seat due to the treasons of hundred Kaurava brothers.

Pandavas have spent years on exile and followed all conditions of exile and requested the kaurava brothers to give them half the state which is their legal inheritance. When denied, they asked for 5 villages, that too was denied. They have compromised for 5 houses which was also rejected. When all attempts at peace even with the effective mediation and negotiations of Krishna were declined, war was the most unavoidable outcome to deliver natural justice to the Pandavas.

The whole 700 verses of the Gita is a treatise amongst Lord Krishna and Arjuna in an existential dilemma on the combat zone of Kurukshetra adjoining New Delhi, India, in around 3,100 years BCE. This dialogue was reported to the sightless sovereign, Dhritrashtra, by his charioteer, Sanjaya, as a bystander war commentary.

VIII. INTRA PERSONAL CONFLICT OF ARJUNA

The plot is the consecrated place of Kurukshetra. The location is a combat zone. The conditions are combat related. The key individuals are the Charismatic Warrior King, Arjuna being led by the transcendental leader Krishna as his charioteer observed by four million fighters protected by their corresponding military commanders-in-chief.

On the chosen day of the Mahabharata battle, the Kaurava and Pandava armies stood face to face. After mentioning the chief warriors on both the sides, Arjuna's mounting depression is defined as he doesn't want to be the reason for the upcoming death and destruction of his kith and kin and mentors and all the unimaginable consequences following a war.

Glancing at his relatives, counting his grandfather, his teacher Drona on the other side, Arjuna was weighed down with anguish. He could not rationalize homicide in order to be successful at the battlefield. (Mahabharata, Calcutta: H.C. Dass, 1895-1905)

When this thought crossed his mind, his incredibly powerful bow Gandiva has slipped from his hand and he sat down in his chariot, lamenting, adamant to quit. He decided not to fight the battle when he has come face to face with his own cousins, teachers, relatives, known people whom he loved and cared for.

From this confused state of mind, where Arjuna's perception was clouded by his emotions, his mentor Krishna took charge of the situation and delivered Bhagavad-Gita or the 'Song of the Lord' more than fifty centuries

ago in Kurukshetra, India to boost the declining morale of Arjuna and to lift him from his intra-personal conflict highlighting the essence of Spiritual Intelligence in a profound way.

The ever charismatic war hero, Arjun, the protagonist of this work, the first among the exceptional warriors of his times, caught in identity crisis and emotional dissonance in a battlefield made an impulsive decision not to fight his enemies who are his blood relatives and mentors though his war cry and the sound of his conch shell which indicated his preparedness to fight few minutes back send shudders down the enemies mind. It was Krishna's responsibility as a mentor to recap Arjuna of his duties as a Kshatriya, warrior as he was a bit taken aback to see the moral dilemma of the warrior after reaching the combat place with the only intention to fight for justice. As Arjuna was also trained in dharma, the art of righteousness, Krishna adopted an all-inclusive training clarifying the nature of individual soul, the nature of ultimate intelligence and the connection between the individual soul, universal soul and the universe.

Krishna, sensed a leadership crisis and mentored Arjuna throughout the 18 chapters till his delusion completely fade away as he is enlightened with the understanding of the nature of true self.

Sloka- Chapter 2, verse 3, Bhagavad Gita

Transliteration

Klaibyammaasmagamahpaarthanaitattwayyupapadyate

Kshudramhridayadaurbalyamtyaktottishtaparantapahl.

Meaning

Krishna denigrates Arjuna's hopelessness and educate him not to yield to this impotence for it does not suit him and that he should get rid of this feebleness of heart and stand up.

Interpretation

Krishna's responds to Arjuna's lamentation was a clarion call to duty irrespective of the situation. Gita starts with the Vishada yoga (righteous despair or identity crisis) ends with the Sanyasa yoga (renunciation of the false self-image). Arjuna faces intra-personal conflict of cognitive dissonance and emotional dissonance. The power of the beliefs implanted by his schooling, upbringing, social dogmas of the times and his good nature stood as an impediment in between him and his nature of work.

In the middle of the battlefield, Arjuna sees that the Kauravas army displayed against him consists of everything that means the world for him. He has seen his own relatives, his beloved teachers, his childhood friends and loved ones. All of a sudden, in a state of emotional and intellectual paralysis, the great warrior's bow slips from his hand and he calls out to Krishna to stop his chariot, stop the war and withdraw from the battle as he doesn't want to be responsible for the blood shed of his own people.

From this turbulent state of mind, where Arjun's perception was clouded by his emotions, where he was going through a cognitive as well as an affective conflict, his mentor Krishna took charge of the situation and walk the talk of getting him out of the leadership crisis and guiding him to fight the cause with all sense of clarity of purpose.

IX. SELFKNOWLEDGE, SOLUTION FOR IDENTITY CRISIS AND INTRA-PERSONAL CONFLICT

Krishna explains the identity of the Transcendental Self. Self-knowledge is the ultimate goal for any human being highlighted in Bhagavad Gita and self-knowledge is realizing the nature of self which is expressed as transcendental self. Transcendental self is the spiritual intelligence or consciousness which is the source of all

other intelligences, mind and body. There are two ideas of self; the transcendental self and the super imposed self-explained in chapter 13 kshetra-kshetragna yoga of Bhagavad Gita.

Shloka:Chapter 13,verse 2 and 3 Bhagavad Gita.

Transliteration

Idamśharīramkaunteyakṣhetramityabhīdhīyate

etadyovettitamprāhuḥkṣhetra-jñaiti tad-vidah(13.2) .

kṣhetra-jñamchāpimāmviddhisarva-kṣhetreṣhubhārata

kṣhetra-kṣhetrajñayorjñānamyattajjñānammataṁ mama (13.3) .

Meaning

O Arjuna, This body, is termed as the field of action, and one who recognizes that body is just a field, an instrument for the soul is called the knower of the field of action. Understanding of the ksetra or the body and ksetrajna or the soul is real knowledge according to my judgment - says Krishna to Arjun.

Interpretation

This is the second verse from chapter 13 kshetra-kshetragna yoga where Krishna explains the Field-fielder theory. Transcendental self is the all-inclusive consciousness which contains the DNA of everything in the universe.

This physical form is identified as the ksetra or field .The material body consists of the five essentials, five senses, mind and false ego and is the foundation of feeling the senses, the dual emotions of liking and disliking, actions and reactions etc.

Knowledge apart from the true nature of self leads an individual to false self-identifications and illusions and delusions. Thus it has been stated that the actions that matters are merely those that are applicable to the knowledge of self. When one realizes that all the realities we experience through the sense organs are superimpositions on a single consciousness that is changeless and eternal and that's the truesense of I and all investigations of the eternal question of 'Who am I' takes rest when we realize that in our personal experience.

Field-fielder (kshetra-kshetragna) kshetragna, fielder is the consciousness and kshetra, the Field, anything other than the self is a superimposition on that consciousness.

The out of the world experience of knowing one's self is a feeling away from any kind of explanation. The conflict arises in our day to day interactions from our cognitive, emotional conflict to inter personal conflict need to be viewed merely as a field. The goal is to find the fielder among all the chaos and disruptions. The instructions of Krishna to Arjuna at the combat zone rise above religious convictions, philosophies, dogmas and is timeless and ageless and appeals to all nationalities and generations. Without the knowledge of the self, leadership may tend to be egocentric than working for the benefit of the entire living beings.

X. CONCLUSION

To conclude, the knowledge of self which is considered as the soul's intelligence from Bhagavad Gita offers solution to address the deep rooted feelings of Identity crisis ,Intra personal conflict etc and achieve excellence under any turbulent times.

Knowledge of self is a deciding factor in resolving identity crisis which helps individuals to unleash their inner potential freely and allows one to experience the changing world of events enlivened by a changeless immortal principle.

Intra personal conflict which is a result of cognitive and emotional dissonance melts away with the insight of the whole world as a field/canvas and the self as transcendental self that witness all the conflict episodes as if it's on a television screen. This understanding of self-knowledge creates a culture of abundance at work places where employees work to realize their full potential and their benchmark is to realize the self.

Arjuna is a perfect example for despondency and frustration metamorphosed into realization of the self with a highly trained mind capable of carrying out any task dispassionately. Muniapan, B. (2005). Where there is a partnership of Spiritual Intelligence and a mind that has constant access to it, that partnership is successful just like the partnership of Krishna and Arjuna. We need to nourish a culture of collaboration at workplace in such a way that the tree of life has deep roots in knowledge of the self and the branches and leaves spread as a million points of creativity and innovation that promote organizational excellence devoid of identity crisis and organizational crisis.

XI. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- [1] Bhagavad Gita and Management, World Management Lessons from India, M.P. Bhattathiri, Retired Chief Technical Examiner, Government of Kerala, India .
- [2] Bhagavad-gita as It Is. Translated by Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. New York: MacMillan, 1972.
- [3] Bhagavadgita, The. Translated by Kees W. Bolle. Berkeley: University of California, 1979.
- [4] Bhagavadgita, The. Translated by W. Douglas P. Hill. London: Oxford University Press, 1928.
- [5] Bhagavad Gita, The. Translated by Juan Mascaro: Harmondsworth: Penguin, repr. 1984.
- [6] Bhagavadgita, The. Translated by Kashinath T. Telang. Sacred Books of the East, vol. 8. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1882.
- [7] Bhagavad-gita, The. Translated by R.C. Zaehner. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969.
- [8] Chatterjee, Debashish, Timeless Leadership: 18 Leadership Sutras from The Bhagavad Gita.
- [9] Carter, R. 1998, Mapping the Mind, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London.
- [10] David B. King, Extracting Intelligence from Spirituality, A New Model of Human Ability.
- [11] Danah Zohar, Ian Marshall, 2004, Spiritual Capital: Wealth We Can Live By, Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- [12] Muniapan, B.. (2005). "The Philosophy of Bhagavad Gita and its Relevance to Human Resource Development in the 21st Century", International Conference on Cultural and Religious Mosaic of South and Southeast Asia: Conflict and Consensus through the Ages, 1st South and Southeast Asian Association of Study of Religion (SSEASR) Conference under UNESCO, New Delhi, India, 27-30 January.
- [13] Mahabharata, The. edited by Pratapa Chandra Ray, 19 vols. in 11. Calcutta: Bharata Press, 1884-94.
- [14] Mahabharata. Translated by Kamala Subramaniam, Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1977.