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# **A Few Aspects of Sri Bhagvad Gita on- Work, Soul, Creation, & Spirituality**

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### **Abstract**

*Sreemad Bhagvad Gita has been viewed as the comprehensive philosophy of life and work to be practiced, for those who want to lead a higher level of life, with spiritual intent. It is all about long discourses imparted to Arjuna in Kuruksetra battlefield by his mentor Sri Krishna, who is said in Bhagvad Gita as the inarnation of God in human form. A few of the topics of Bhagvad Gita discussed in the present study include:*

- *Work to be taken up as duty & the value orientation of the same.*
- *The story of immortal Atman/Brahman - revealed as the all pervading non-dual existence, consciousness and bliss; and making the corrolary of the world to be nothing but Its reflection, and creation as Its projection with alternate manifestation and unmanifestation continuing since eternity.*
- *Identification of different shades of equinanimity, samatva attititude- in societal transactions as well in emotional level -as the criterion of wisdom and spirituality transcending the limitations of gunas- sattva (serenity), rajas (dynamism) & tamas(slothness).*
- *Discussions on scope of awakening innate divinity from devotion with a vision of God in everything, and service with an attitude of self-lessness; they being identified with spirituality.*

*The message of Bhagbad Gita imparted by Sri Krishna, has been depicted as the eternal truth with assurance of enlightenment to the entire mankind for all countries on all human race.*

***Key words: Atman/ Brahman, yajna, para, apara, ksetra, sthitaprajna, maya, Sri Krishna***

**Introduction:** If you ask any Indian “what is Bhagvad Gita”? The responses will invariably be “Gita is a religious book of the Hindus which a devout Hindu should read everyday”. However, a handful might say—“It is a religious book highly regarded in Hindu faith, which narrates as to how Sri Krishna could motivate a reluctant Arjuna to fight in the Kuruksetra battle field”. But going through Bhagvad Gita deeply it can be seen how superficial these descriptions are. In the first place, it is not just a book to be read, but is a

comprehensive philosophy of life and work to be practiced, for those who want to lead a higher level of life, not just for Hindus, but for all mankind *per se*. As regards motivating to fight, there are hardly 6-8 slokas constituting less than 1% of the entire Srimad Bhagvad Gita content (700 slokas) which speaks of war, and that too, advising to fight with a spirit of surrender to God, *mamanuswara judhya ca*<sup>1</sup> and simultaneously advising to maintain an attitude of non-enmity to all, *nirbaira sarbabhutesu*<sup>2</sup>. Srimad Bhagvad Gita rather preaches to work with a tremendous humanistic impulse. It is certainly not a book advocating war; rather it gives a complete story of human development and fulfillment, attainment of perfection by blossoming forth our innate divinity.

Srimad Bhagvad Gita starts with the dilemma of Arjuna, the great warrior Pandava, who wanted to back off from the Kurukshetra battle field, at the very onset of it. He had made best efforts of war against the Kauravas for 12 long years of their exile, but when faced with stark reality it dawned on him that he should not fight with his own people. Such dilemma of Arjuna, said to be weakness as pointed out by Sri Krishna, arose not from a question of choosing right versus wrong; but rather right versus right: apparent right versus real right, which we do face at all times in our life. Sri Krishna showed us when there is a conflict between personal bias or attachment, versus principle or ideal- it is always principle or ideal to be chosen. In the conflict between emotion and self attachment, versus duty or justice- it is duty or justice to be chosen; without bothering for personal bias or emotion, and certainly not for petty attachment condoning wrong doings. Sri Krishna uses the word *kliba*-because Arjuna's dilemma was nothing but weakness which behaved neither the heroic values of manliness, nor the virtues of forbearance, *ksma*, of womanhood. Weakness and virtue can never co exist. Sri Krishna also pointed out that Arjuna being of the warrior clan, will ultimately get induced to fight being compelled from his very psychological disposition itself, *svhabjena kounteya nibandha svena karmana*.<sup>3</sup> His aversion to war was nothing but a temporary outburst of emotional froth, contrary to his *svadharma*, his innate nature.

In the discourse that Sri Krishna opened out thereafter describing all about the philosophy of life on - work, duty, values, creation, society and spirituality etc - were however, not imparted till Arjuna sought for Sri Krishna's advice surrendering himself saying 'I take refuge in thee, take me as your disciple and advise me', *sisyaste aham sadhim mum proponnum*<sup>4</sup>. This is an important point to note for all spiritual seekers. It may also be noted that even after the long discourse that Sri Krishna made, at the end he said, 'You now act as per your wish'- *jathee chasi tatha kuru*<sup>5</sup>- he left it for Arjuna to decide what is to be followed, no imposition made.

Amongst the long discourse of Sri Krishna revealing universal spiritual truth, the topics chosen for discussion, are as below:

1. Work, duty and values.
2. Self, soul and creation.
3. Equanimity and wisdom.
4. Devotion, service and spirituality.

## 5. Sri Krishna, Krishnatva and purusottama

**Work, duty and values**

Sri Krishna's advice on work, saying 'Your duty is to stick to the work only, but never bother for the result'- *karmanye adhikaraste ma phalesu kadachana*<sup>6</sup> - is perhaps mostly misunderstood. This is an important advice not for spiritual seekers alone, but a universal guideline for real fulfillment, and for the good of the society. Apparently it seems contradictory that how can one work sincerely, if one is not mindful of the result. In fact, an affectionate mother, a good sports coach- actually follows this advice even without reading Bhagvad Gita. The mother takes care of the baby for her sheer love for the child, without an iota of thought of the return she will get from it. A sports coach advises the player to focus only on the game, giving his/her best performance; without bothering for win or defeat, which is termed as sportsman's spirit. A dedicated social -worker works for the good of the society, without expectation of any reward from it. Expectation of return stems from the **selfish design** only, for which all spiritual seekers consider- *phala hetaba karma*- desire oriented result seeking work to be *-abarong karma*-worst type of action; and prescribes action with evenness of mind, *buddhi-yoga*<sup>7</sup>. It is a fact that too much attention on self benefits as derivable, invokes tension and struggle, and thus also affects taking right decision, as required for successful accomplishment of the work. On the other side, with a little spiritual development performing work with a detached attitude, work ceases to be burden. In that case labour turns into leisure. Such persons with a spirit of detachment on larger love for the society, working for *lokasamgraha*, for the good of others, finds rather joy in the work. In such type of self-less attitude of work -undertaken by the spiritual seekers, one attains the feeling of 'work to be of no-work at all'- *jah pasyet akarmani karma ca*<sup>8</sup>. For such cases, modern psychologist and management gurus adopt the term 'state of flow on work'<sup>9</sup>. They say, in that state the self-ego falls away, time flies and people are seen to be happiest with complete absorption of their activity only.

Such 'state of **flow**' with deep activities for the joy of the work only, as termed by modern psychologists and management gurus, may be said to be identified with the term *yajna*, as cited in Srimad Bhagvad Gita. In the early Vedic period, *yajna*, merely meant lighting a fire, pouring some ghee or rice into the fire as sacrificial *ahuti*. But in Srimad Bhagvad Gita any work done with *buddhi yoga* - with spiritual inclination, with a spirit of service and sacrifice, is called *yajna*. Even the food we take may be called *yajna*, when we take it not for sense satisfaction, but with a spirit of offering *ahuti* to the fire of *jatharagni*, the stomach. Every work done with an attitude of sacrifice and service, undertaken with spiritual inclination, can be said to be *yajna*, as termed by Sri Krishna<sup>10</sup>. The whole life can then be converted to a *yajna*. It is the **attitude** of doing work which is important not the work by itself. Sri Krishna also assures saying- *bahubidha yajna bitata brahmno mukhe, karmajan bidhi tan sarban ebong jnatwa bimokswase*<sup>11</sup>- various such *yajnas* are in Vedas, which are all action oriented and working upon which one can attain *moksa*, freedom from the cycle of birth and death. Though we begin our journey with action, but finally it leads to

attainment of spiritual realization- karma ...*jnane parisampte*<sup>12</sup> -work ends up with spiritual wisdom.

There is a misnomer, that since work or duty creates new off-shoots of work, hence undertaking work/duty rather binds which may be detrimental for ascetics aspiring spiritual progress, *kamya karmanang nayasong sannyasong biduh*<sup>13</sup>, as is termed *Naiskarmasidhi*, which is the aspiration for attainment of freedom (*moksa* from the cycle of birth and death), by not getting enchained from the bondage of work or duty. Sri Krishna on the contrary advocates in favour of work when taken up with an attitude of service and self-lessness, with non-attachment. He stresses never to forsake work, rather encourages taking up work with *yajna* spirit, working on charity and austerity, which being - *pabanani maneesinum*<sup>14</sup> purifier of the mind, rather helps in spiritual advancement.

Srimad Bhagwad Gita gives the message that if one accomplishes his or her own duty to society with a **spirit of worship** (in *yajna* spirit), he or she can attain the highest spiritual development. *sve sve karmani abhiratah songsidhing labhate narah --- sva karmana tam abhyarcha sidhing bindati*<sup>15</sup> - By worshipping (taking up work as worship) Him (God) through his assigned duty only with devotion, one can reach one's own perfection. Such assigned societal duty (taken up in *yajna* spirit) as per one's natural inclination and psychological disposition<sup>16</sup>, could be as varied as- dissemination of knowledge, providing security or wealth generation to the society, or imparting self-less service<sup>17</sup>. The humblest of occupation and so called big occupation in society have no difference when considered from their spiritual value orientation. This is the supremely divine message of Srimad Bhagwad Gita. This message of Gita transforms all types of work (taken up in *yajna* spirit) as the means of attaining greatest spiritual perfection, which in turn leads to the highest human fulfillment<sup>18,19</sup>.

### **Self, soul (*Atman*) and creation**

India is endowed with rich natural resources and enjoys a fairly habitable climate due to its geographical advantage (mainly from the Himalayas), and thus the overall populace of **ancient** India, never had to struggle much to meet basic needs for survival. They could thus be able to be mindful on search for philosophical pursuits on the meaning of life, delving deep inwards than carried away with only on the material aggrandisement. Thus, India developed a culture of *Rishis*(seers), who bloomed ancient India's psyche with the elegance of infinity, making ancient India a nation in the quest of spirituality. It is thus called *punyabhumi*, the holy land, where the kings were patrons of these *Rishis* or, *Rishis* themselves (like King *Janaka*).

The *Rishis* introduced a novel approach on the concept of God, man and spirituality, innovating a new term *Brahman/(Atman)*, over which Sri Krishna mentions about it to have been sung by the *Rishis* in various ways, in *Brahmasutra*, the handbook of Brahman (*Rishibhih bohudha chandobhih geetam, brahmasutra pada eb ca*<sup>20</sup>). They spelt out *brahman* as<sup>21</sup>:

- *Satyam, jnanam, anantam brahman- brahman* is infinite existence/reality and knowledge.
- *Yo veda nihitam guhayam* - that knowledge (of *brahman*) is hidden in the cave of our heart.
- *Brahmavid apnoti param* - knower of *brahman* attains the highest, also reiterated in Gita as - *yong labdha caparong labhang manyate nadhikang tatah* <sup>22</sup>- by attainment of which no other acquisition is considered greater.

The very term *brahman* means vast, with no limit. This vast infiniteness of *brahman* has been conceived, from the perspective of- space, time and object (*desh, kal, bastu*). Infinite space means, there is no space without it, which makes the **omnipresent** characteristic of *Brahman*. Infinite time means there was no time when Brahman did not exist, thereby giving the **eternity** characteristic of *brahman*. Gita while speaking on *Atman*, which is the other name of *brahman* (the very word *atman* means all pervading<sup>23</sup>) echoes the same saying *atman* as - *ajah nityang saswtoyang purano na hanyte* <sup>24</sup> - having no birth nor death, ever existing the same, eternal. Objectwise infiniteness means there is no object in the universe which is other than *Brahman*. The space time limitations of our experienced real objects are only because of them being tagged with their individual names and forms in the limitless ocean of **existence** itself, which is *Brahman*. This approach of commonalising all objects stressing upon their existence clause only in the ocean of existence, may be compared with the space time boundary of the individual waves versus their limitless real nature when considered on the characteristic of their ingrained mass of water in the vast ocean. The message in Srimad Bhagwad Gita- *nasato bidyate bhavah nabhabo bidyate satah* <sup>25</sup> - meaning that which is unreal can never exist (nor can an object be created which has no existence already), and the real can never non-exist (nor can ever a real object be destroyed completely making it non-existent). This universal truth of Srimad Bhagwad Gita is not merely the conservation law of science that states mass- energy conserves together. It stresses upon the characteristic that *brahman* is **non-dual**, no second of it, *advaita*. (Since there cannot be anything other than having existence i.e. other than *brahman*-which is existence itself). Such non-duality of *brahman* has been poetically expressed in Gita as- *brahmarpanang brahma habih brahbagnou brahmana hutam* <sup>26</sup> - in the act of *yajna* the ladle of *yajna*, the oblation offered, the fire alighted and the person doing it- are all *brahman*.

The same logic of non-duality of objects- stressing upon their commonality of existence clause only, leaving aside their individual names and forms- can also be applied in case of *anantam jnanam*, infiniteness of knowledge as well. Though the acquirement of individual knowledge on different topics is certainly limited, but they are all experienced only through our **consciousness**, *chaitanya (chit)*. Objects of knowledge are all grounded on our consciousness, without cognition of which no knowledge is possible. This pure consciousness, with which we experience all objects, all knowledge and which is **eternal, all pervading and non-dual, is Brahman**, and being infinite, is joy(*anandam*), or **bliss**.

*Brahman* (or, the *atman*) - the infinite existence consciousness and bliss, said as *sat*, *chit*, and *ananda*, i.e. *saccidananda*, is the God, in the parlance of the devotees, which is also perceivable as Sri Krishna in Srimad Bhagvad Gita. Speaking of Himself, Sri Krishna says- *Ajah san api abyaatma bhutanum iswrah san api-* though I am birthless and imperishable and also Lord of all creatures, but - *svang prakritim adhisthya, sambhabami atma mayayaa*<sup>27</sup> - I come forth as being (*jiva*), using my own inscrutable power, *Maya*. *Brahman* has also been said to be *nihitam guhayaum*, hidden in the cave of our heart, meaning that is what our real self (*atman*) is! Delving deep within us, the ancient *rishis* in search of the unchanging *brahman* analogous to our consciousness, could designate five interlocking sheaths within us<sup>28</sup>. The first one the gross body (anatomical body), termed *annamoy kosha*, the food-grown body, can obviously be not identified with our consciousness. The second one termed *pranamoy kosha*, our subtle body (*suksha sarira*) that maintains our life force (subtle body maintaining automatic breathing, blood circulation etc), do not also qualify as our consciousness. The third one is *manomoy kosha*, our mind as such which apparently seem to be the consciousness *brahman*, but it also does not qualify as *brahman*. Since though subtle, our mind with emotions etc, undergoes changes and also is an object over which we can be aware of (on our feelings etc)- hence cannot be the subject, our real self, which is the witness consciousness, the unchanging reality *brahman*. Still subtler body within us apart from *manomoy kosha*, is *bijnanmoy kosha*, our intellect, our judgmental faculty, which though still subtler than our normal mind, but is also an object, a particular faculty of us that we possess; hence cannot be the subject- self, the *atman/brahman*. Srimad Bhagwad Gita echoes the same saying- *manasa tu budhih para, jah tu budheh paratah svah*<sup>29</sup> - intellect is superior to the mind, while that which is superior to the mind is the self, the *atman/ brahman*. The fifth sheath nearest to *brahman* or, *atman* is *anandamoy kosha*, the body of bliss. It is said during our dream state, our body sleeps but mind is active creating its own world. In deep sleep our mind also sleeps, but on waking up we are able to report an experience of blankness, the restfulness that we enjoyed during deep sleep, which is the *anandamoy kosha*<sup>28</sup>. All our feelings of happiness etc stems from this blissful state, the *anandamoy kosha*. But this also does not qualify as *brahman*, from the same logic that an **object** of experience cannot be the **subject**, the **experiencer**, the self. It is from the ignorance of our body -mind complex that we identify ourselves with our feelings of heat and cold, happiness and distress; confuse our feelings with our real self, the *atman/ brahman*. This has been cited in Srimad Bhagwad Gita which says - *ajnanena abritong jnanong, tena muhyanti jantabah*<sup>30</sup> - beings are deluded from the reality, since their knowledge remain enveloped with ignorance (e.g. rope getting confused as snake). Thus *Brahman* or *atman*, the subject (our real self), can never be an object of knowledge, the domain of which gets limited to either in the objects known or objects unknown. Thus *Brahman (atman)*, our real self, can never be known nor can be said to be an unknown **object** of our knowledge, it has only to be **realised**.

This truth has been cited in Srimad Bhagwad Gita, at several discourses, where gross matter, termed *apara prakriti* of God has been clubbed together with mind, intellect and

ego, and cited them to be of the God's lower nature, where His higher nature, the *para prakriti*, is said to be the soul of individual beings (*jiva*), that sustains the world<sup>31</sup>. The same truth has been reiterated stating two other principles as, *ksetra and ksetrajna*, as matter and spirit. Matter along with all objects of knowledge of the world has been termed as *ksetra*-the field. While the knower of the field, knower of all objects has been termed *ksetrajna*, the subject, the real self, *atman/brahman*<sup>32</sup> -which is infinite existence consciousness and bliss. It may be relevant to add that entire physical science deals only on *ksetra*, the objects of knowledge, the observed facts only. It does not tell anything on *ksetrajna*, the **observer**, the subject- the consciousness.

It is also to be stressed that this consciousness is not only infinite, it is **non-dual** as well; as has been said- *abibhaktanca bhutesu bibhaktam ib sthitam*<sup>33</sup> -though it is undivided and singular, it seems to be divided and many in beings. This One infinite consciousness *brahman*, or this spark of divinity that shines within me or you- is the same in me as in yours and we are all essentially **One**. This truth has been specifically highlighted stating that - *jada bhuta prithak bhabam ekastham anupasyti, tada eba ca bistarong tada brahman sampdyate*<sup>34</sup> - the realization that all beings are centred in one and come out of one, is the proper realization of *brahman*.

*Brahman (Atman)* is said to be *vyotisum api jyoti*, the light of all lights, by its light only the whole universe is alighted. It is *tamasah para*, beyond all darkness, untouched by ignorance. It is *jnanong, jneya, jnanagamyang*, it is the knowledge, the knowable and also accessible through knowledge. Such *brahman*, the hidden splendour-our soul, is said in Srimad Bhagwad Gita as *hridi sarbasya bishthitam*.<sup>35</sup> - remains implanted as the ruler in the heart of all beings. It has been added further- *jatha prakaset ekoh kritsang lokah imang rabih, ksetraong ksetri tatha prakasayti*<sup>36</sup> - as the one sun illumines the world, likewise the embodied soul (*brahman/atman*-which is self luminous-*svaprakash*) illumines all bodies. In fact, the world that appears to us through our senses- vision, hear, smell, taste and touch- is nothing but the reflection of the light of this non-dual *brahman/ atman*, which shines forth within us, our innate divinity, over which we may not be aware of. As reflection of the sun in different mirrors looks as if consisting many suns appearing in different mirrors, likewise, we the *jiva* are deluded as if we have all separate consciousness, though like one real sun - real consciousness, the *brahman* is **singular**, one only.

Sri Krishna says- *maya tatam idam sarbong jagat abykta murtina*<sup>37</sup> - this entire world is pervaded by Me in my unmanifested form (*para prakriti, ksetra*). Stressing upon it Sri Krishna adds further- *maya bina jat syat tat caracaram bhutang nasti*<sup>38</sup> -without me nothing is there in the universe, whether moving or static. Thus nothing is secular in this universe, everything is sacred, and everything is divine<sup>40</sup>. Our goal in life should be to **manifest this divinity, innate** within us. Srimad Bhagwad Gita elaborates the means of such manifestation of divinity within and thereby attaining immortality/perfection, by using any one or a combination the four paths, like- self-less work, pursuit of spiritual knowledge, love of God/devotion and/or, psychic control/meditation (*karma-yaga, jnana -yoga, bhakti-yoga, dhyana-yoga*)<sup>39</sup>. The great assurances given in such pursuits are- *swalpam api*

*dharmasya trayate mahato bhayat*<sup>41</sup> - even a little effort of such spiritual practices saves us from great danger. Also-*na hi kalyanakari kascit durgati gachati*<sup>42</sup> - doer of good never comes by evil. It is also assured that nothing is lost in such spiritual journey. The gain achieved in spiritual discipline, is carried forward in next birth, assuring a favourable environment for it- *suchinang srimatang gehe yogavrasta abhijayate*<sup>43</sup> - such spiritual seekers would be born in the house of pure and prosperous (having a favourable ambience) wherefrom one would be able to meet the unfinished goal, for attaining perfection.

It may be relevant to add that in Srimad Bhagwad Gita, death is considered merely a change of phase in the body, like changes from childhood to youth and to old age, and thereafter taking up a new body after death. Death is viewed as- *basannsi jirnani jatha bihaya nabani grihnanti tatha sarirani bihaya sangjati nabani dehi*<sup>44</sup> -similar to that of forsaking a torn cloth wearing a new one. It is to be pointed out that the body which is forsaken in death, is only our gross body, the *annamoya kosh*. The subtle body of us, *suksha sarir*, is carried forward to the new body (in next birth) with all its ingrained faculties (*sanskaras*) intact. The cycle of such birth and death continues till God realization, which is said as dissolution in the immortal *atman*, as quoted in Gita- *mahatmanah mum upetya duhkhalayam asasvatong punarjanma na apnubanti*<sup>45</sup> - the great souled ones on attaining Me (God realization), are freed from the cycle of birth and death, thus get rid of the abode of misery and non-eternal.

The immortality of the soul, *atman*, or *brahman*- whose reflection only appears as the world experienced through our senses- has been stressed in Srimad Bhagwad Gita stating - *abinasi tu tatbidhi jena sarbam idam tatam*<sup>46</sup> - it be known that the principle by which all this world is pervaded is imperishable. Thus being birthless and deathless, creation of the universe in Srimad Bhagwad Gita is mentioned to be merely projection from unmanifest to manifestation, as stated- *Abyktadini bhutani byakta mdhyani*<sup>47</sup> - beings unmanifest at their beginning, are manifest in the middle with their dissolution again in the unmanifest itself. Using the modern terminology creation of the universe as per Srimad Bhagwad Gita, is the projection of big bang singularity of creation with expansion, followed by big crunch of contraction, with alternate big bang and big crunch continuing since eternity.

In fact, the Universe, termed as combination of *para & apara*, or *ksetra & ksetrajna*, as per the terminology of Gita, has been viewed as the aggregate of 24 categories<sup>48</sup> of *para* or *ksetra* as experienced by the singular *apara* or *ksetrajna*, the witness consciousness\*. As regards the periods of manifestations or big bang (as also of the big crunch) the ancient *rishis* (seers) had an extraordinary vision of time, termed as *kalpa* of around 4.32 billion years<sup>49</sup> \*\*. This period is considered either as the period of day, or the same period as night, of the four-headed God, the *Brahma* (not to be confused with *brahman*, which signifies infinite non-dual consciousness absolute). It has been stated that manifestation or creation of the universe, *byakta*, starts at the outbreak of the day of *brahma*, which is the beginning of *kalpa*. Whence dissolution of the universe, or *praloy/ abykta*, unmanifestation is initiated at the advent of night of *brahma* which is said as *kalpaksaya*, or declining of *kalpa*. It may be noted that beings do not get liberated from the cycle of birth and death even after getting

merged in the dissolution of the creation, *brahma's* night, who reappear again at the *brahma's* onset of day - till one attains the primordial supreme absolute, having God realization (or emerging as *brahmavid*) when- *yogi param sthanong upaiti*<sup>50</sup> - the spiritual seeker attains the premevial supreme abode, gets merged with God-realization.

[ \*N.B. The 24 gross matter considered as *ksetra* or, *apara* are- 5 gross matter (solid, liquid, gas, energy and space) added with 5 sense organs (eyes, ear, nose, tongue, skin) also with 5 organs of perception ( see, hear, taste, smell and touch) plus 5 organs of action ( hand, feet, speech etc) added with mind, intellect, ego and causal unmanifested nature (*mula prakrity*)<sup>48, 51, 52</sup>. Aggregate of all these 24 *apara prakrity* viewed from the pure consciousness, the witness *para prakrity* - makes this universe per se. ]

[\*\*NB- It has been said in Gita that, *sahassra yuga parjantang brahmano jat ahah - ratriing yuga sahasrantang*<sup>53</sup>, 1000 *yugas* makes one day of the mythological 4 headed God Brahma (which is quite different from *brahman* the absolute) and his night also covers 1000 *yugas*. . The period of these *Yugas* has been said to be of 360\*12000 years. =4320,000 years (Since 360 days is considered one day for higher beings, God-heads, and their 12,000 years make the *yugas*-which are 4 in number). Thus, 1000 *Yugas* making day-break of Brahma (the time span of *kalpa*)=4320,000\* 1000 = 4.32\*10<sup>9</sup> years= **4.32 billion years**<sup>49</sup>, which is also the same as Brahma's night.

It has also been said in Gita, *ahah agame abyaktat sarbah agame ratriagame praliyante*<sup>54</sup> - all manifestations (creation or, expansion with big bang in modern terminology) starts at the advent of such day, which gets dissolved again at the onset of such night, getting merged again in unmanifest (big crunch with contraction in modern terminology) Obviously the period covering such alternate creation & dissolution =**4.32 billion years**, which is continuing since eternity, as per Gita.

It may be of interest to note that the vision of *rishis*, on the period of creation ( *kalpa*), viewed to be **4.32 billion yrs**, tallies fairly well with the present day estimation on the **age of the earth**, determined as **4.54 billion years ±50 million years**- as made by the present day scientists of 21<sup>st</sup> century<sup>55</sup>. The age of the **universe** is however, estimated as **13.8 billion years**, estimated by NASA<sup>56</sup>. While the scientists (NASA) etc are silent about the period before big bang of 13.8 billion yrs, Indian *rishis* consider the big bang of expansion, followed by big crunch of contraction, is continuing since eternity. ]

**Equanimity (*Samadarsitva*) and Wisdom:** It has been derived from the very definition of *atman (brahman)*, that there is no object in the universe other than *atman (brahman)* which is non-dual as well, no second of it. This truth of *rishis* have been more explicitly narrated in Srimad Bhagwad Gita as- *sarba bhutastham atmanong sarba bhutani ca atmani, iksate jogajuktatma sarbatra samadarsanah*<sup>57</sup> - the person whose mind is absorbed in *yoga*, he or she has the unique vision of equanimity (*samadarsitva*) to see the self (*atman*) in all beings and all beings in the self. This *samadarsitva* attitude to society is considered a great virtue in spiritual discipline. Persons with such vision are only considered as *pandita*- wise person, which has been quoted in Gita as - *Vidya vinaya sampanne brahmane svapake gabi hastini suni ca eb panditah samadarsinah*<sup>58</sup> - the wise (knower of the self) look with an equal eye on a *brahmin*(respectable person) endowed with learning and humility or a cow, an elephant, a dog and even to an out cast. As because, the same *atman* is in all of them, so the distinction vanish to the wise. Such vision of seeing all as equal (*samadarsitva*)- is a profound message in Srimad Bhagwad Gita for making spiritual progress and have been cited repeatedly in various ways

*Samadarsitva* in social behaviour is preached as - *dvesya bandhusu sadhu ari ca papesu samabudhi bisisyate*<sup>59</sup> - one who looks equally on a friend or enemy, a hateful person, and righteous unrighteous alike- attains excellence. In the emotional level it is advised - *duhkhesu anudbignamanah sukhesu bigataspriha bitaraga bhya krodhah*<sup>60</sup> - to remain unperturbed in misery nor hankering for happiness, and to be devoid of all attachments, fear and anger. This has been further stressed saying- *sama duhkha sukhang jang dhirang purusang sah amritatvaya kalpate*<sup>61</sup> -( *dhirah*) the wise and steadfast person who is equanimous in pleasure and pain, is fit for immortality. In the intellectual level it has been advised - *jogastha kuru karmani sangong tyktah...sidhyasidhyoh samo bhutva samatvam joga ucyate*<sup>62</sup> - to perform all actions giving up attachment maintaining *yoga* spirit, without bothering for success or failure.

Attainment of such *samatvam* attitude, the evenness of the mind, is *yoga*. In fact, the quality of a devotee has been identified with such equanimity attitude of mind (*samatvam*) added with love and compassion to all, as has been cited - *Advesta sarbabhutanang maitrah karuna eba ca nirmamo nirahankarah samaduhkhong sukhang kshami*<sup>63</sup> -to attain qualities of having no enmity to any being, friendly and compassionate to all, free from the ego of 'I and mine', even- minded in pain and pleasure and also forbearing. The seekers of devotion are required to be endowed with all these qualities.

In addition to this *samatva* quality- which is an attitude of maintaining equanimity, the quality of *dama*, which means controlling the sense organs and thus disciplining the mind- are also considered important in spiritual journey. In this context Gita gives a strong message saying- *jena atmana eba atma jitah atma tasya atmanah bandhuh anatmanah tu atma eb satrubat*<sup>64</sup> - you are your own friend, if you win over and can discipline your sense organs and you yourself are your own enemy if you allow them a free hand. Simultaneously, a balanced way of moderate life style is advocated in Gita, avoiding all sorts of extremes in day to day life style, as said- *juktaharabiharasya jukta chestasu karmasu jukta sapnaba bodhasya yogo bhabati dukhaha*<sup>65</sup> (ch6-sl-17)- for attainment of Yoga and thereby destroying misery, one should lead a moderate life style on food, recreation, work efforts, sleep and wakefulness. Unnecessary physical austerities are discouraged in Srimad Bhagwad Gita. Srimad Bhagwad Gita's advice of following such balanced life style in spiritual practices, avoiding unnecessary austerities, finds an important stand in Buddha's teaching, which is termed as 'the follow of middle path'. It has also been stressed that- *atmana atmanong udharet atmanomg na abasadayet*<sup>66</sup> - you should raise yourself by yourself, and never let yourself down. This is a profound message in Srimad Bhagwad Gita, where awakening the self with the divine spark within, with assertion inwardly and strengthening it on all aspects with confidence of the self is stressed, and excuse of external adversaries coming in the way has been totally negated.

The *rishis* considered that the whole of nature has three types of entities, the *gunas*- *satva* (serenity), *rajas* (dynamism)), and *tamas*(inertness)- which are said to be the impelling forces, both in cosmos outside and in individual human beings as individuals. The whole of creation is said to be constituted of different types of distribution of these three

*gunas* which are the binding forces of nature. It is however, only human beings which has the capability to be freed from the bondage of these *gunas* and can become *trigunatita*, transcending the three *gunas*, which is the same as realising the divine in the self, the *atman*.

*Sattva guna*, though illuminating (*prakasatmak*) but it also binds with hankering for happiness and learning<sup>67</sup>. *Rajas guna* binds with activity and passion<sup>68</sup>. *Tamas* is sloth & inert, born from ignorance and delusion which binds with laziness and miscomprehension<sup>69</sup>. We all pass through these three states or *gunas* dominating with one over the other two<sup>70</sup>, and we have also the capability to ascend from the lowest level of *tamas* to the middle state of *rajas* and thereafter the highest to *sattvas*<sup>71</sup> - and thencefrom can transcend all the three *gunas* (*trigunatita*) getting freed from the cycle of birth and death attaining immortality<sup>72</sup>. In this state of *trigunatita* one attains the equanimity vision (*samatvam*) of - *Samaduhkhah sukhong svasthah samalostasma kancanah ---dhirah, tulya ninda atma songstutih*<sup>73</sup> - taking on pleasure and pain alike, be well composed in self, having no preference for mud, stone or gold, be wise and to remain unconcerned in blame or praise. Human beings can slowly develop inner spiritual strength to resist these binding forces of nature, and attain the development of equanimous mind, transcending the bondage of the *gunas* to emerge as *gunatitah* (transcending the *gunas*) after a long spiritual struggle<sup>74</sup>.

**Devotion, service and spirituality:** It has been said in Gita, that all those who remain within the bondage of these *gunas* of nature, remain captivated and deluded with the charm and varieties of this world, which is but the play of these *gunas* only. But they cannot know the immutable ground material-*brahman* (the immutable infinite consciousness and bliss) beyond this apparent world, as said by Sri Krishna - *mohitam nabhijanati mum ebhyah param abyam*<sup>75</sup> - being deluded people do not know Me, the immutable, who is beyond this apparent world. On the other side, speaking of the liberated ones who could transcend the bondage of the *gunas*, Lord says- *jo mung pasyati sarbatra sarbang ca moyee pasyati, tasyahong na pranasyimi sa ca me na pranasyiti*<sup>76</sup> - one who sees Me everywhere, and see all things in Me, does not lose sight of me nor do I of him<sup>77</sup>. This is a great truth in Srimad Bhagvad Gita. A devotee thus sees his Lord everywhere and in everything. A *jnani*- who has attained the stage of realization of *brahman*, *brahmavid* - also gets such all inclusive vision of the world -which is truly speaking nothing but an appearance of *brahman*, the reflection of *brahman*. Both reach the same goal post with such vision of all inclusive divinity encompassing the world, viewed in their respective spirit. The devotee gets merged in God, and the *jnani* realises himself to be *Brahman*, the infinite consciousness bliss eternal.

This realization of **one behind the many** acquired from spiritual development, makes one *brahmabhuta* unlike an ordinary person who are *byaktibhuta*, having the feeling of separate individuality colliding with each other. Gita gives us a philosophy and psychology of human development (by following all the four Yogas of *karma*, *bhakti*, *jnana* or *dhyana yoga*- or either of them), through which we can get elevated to *brahmabhuta*, leading to

*prasannatma*, achieving a calm and tranquil mind<sup>78</sup>. In this state of *brahmabhuta*, one, acquires the attitude of *-samang sarbesu bhutesu* - a sense of unity in all beings, that ultimately leads to the love (*bhakti*) of God, as said - *Brahma bhuta prsannatma na sochati na kanksati samang sarbesu bhutesu mad bhakti labhate paraum*<sup>79</sup> - *brahmabhuta prasannatma* person, who neither grieves nor desires developing an attitude of unity in all beings, attains supreme devotion to Me (Sri Krishna, God). Obviously such a spiritual person would have no desire to be met being already fulfilled with the highest acquisition, *bhakti* (and or *jnan*) with the wisdom of equinamity (*samatva*) to all.

This truth of divinity in everything and in every being is further stressed in Srimad Bhagvad Gita, where Sri Krishna says *-sarbabhutasthitong jo mang bhajati ekatvam asthita --sa yogi moyee bartate*<sup>80</sup> - one who worships Me, residing in all being in a spirit of unity, becomes a *yogi* and lives in Me. Since God/divinity is in all beings- welfare activities to all with a spirit of *service* is the same as worshipping the God, which is another way of spiritual practice for God-realisation. Srimad Bhagvad Gita paraphrases this truth saying - *kurjat vidvan tatha asakta cikirsuh lokasangraham*<sup>81</sup>-the wise (enlightened ones) work steadily and unattached (with self-lessness) in *yoga* spirit, for the good of all. The concept of *Lokasangraham chikirsuh* - *eagerness* to provide service to all- as said in Gita, is a great motivation for the spiritual journey. Such service taken up with self-lessness, and in a spirit of worship, in *yajna* spirit, is what is known as *karma-yoga*, the path of action for God-realization.

However, the intent of such *karma-yoga*, the path of service for God realisation, as narrated by Sri Krishna, has been asked to be directed with an attitude - *cetasa sarba karmani moyee sangnyasya mat parah budhi yogam upasritya mat chittah satatang bhava*<sup>82</sup> - to dedicate all actions to Me, of having Me as the supreme goal and resorting to *Yoga* through intellect with mind ever fixed in Me. This instruction of Sri Krishna to the spiritual aspirants, encompass the spirit of all the 4 *yogas*. It includes *bhakti*-stating surrendering all actions to Sri Krishna which comes out of love for Him; *jnana* - stating actions to be in associated with *buddhi-yoga*, which arises from a strong steady mind oriented to oneness with all, where *buddhi* indicates integrated intelligence and will power<sup>83</sup>; *Karma* - being considered self-less action of *lokasangraha*; and of course *dhyana-yoga* -the mind being asked to be ever fixed in God.

The great assurance of Srimad Bhagwad Gita as given to all spiritual seekers added with the advice given is *-tam eba saranang gaccha sarbhaben - tat prasadat parang santim prapyasi sasvatam*<sup>84</sup>-being asked to take refuge in Him (God) **alone** with all your heart, and by His grace you (spiritual aspirant) shall then attain supreme peace and eternal abode. Elaborating the different dimensions of the above advice on 'taking refuge with all the heart'- Sri Krishna explaining the different dimensions of it, says- *manmana mad bhaktah mad jaji bhava mang namaskuru*<sup>85</sup>- fix your mind in Me, be devoted to Me, habitually worship Me, and bow down to Me alone<sup>86</sup>. It has been stressed to focus entire attention to ones own *Ista*. Here 'Me' represents not just Sri Krishna - but God, or any chosen deity (*Ista*) and to focus all attention and efforts with one pointed devotion.

The last and concluding spiritual message in Srimad Bhagvad Gita is to - *sarbadharmnan prityajya mum ekong saranong braja*<sup>87</sup> - give up all duties/service, taking refuge in Me alone<sup>88</sup>. It needs a great spiritual practice to really understand the powerful message of this last lesson of Srimad Bhagwad Gita, which is imparted at the end as the conclusion of the spiritual message of the Srimad Bhagwad Gita<sup>89</sup>. First we have to build up our man-hood (our human-hood), our strength (both in physical plane, intellectual and also in spiritual dimension), our character. And then only we can be eligible to this last lesson of Gita, and can understand the implied meaning of such complete surrender to God, which is the highest level in spiritual attainment<sup>89</sup>. It is to be stressed that unlike our materialistic worldly life such surrender to God in spiritual life comes only when one has grown spiritually very strong- it is the **surrender of the strong** not of the weak<sup>90</sup>. That is why this lesson of *saranagati*, surrender to God, has been imparted as the last lesson of Gita, not at the beginning. Gita also identifies those who are not fit to gauge the depth of this last lesson of Gita, and hence bars sending this message to those who do not sincerely pursue spiritual practices with devotion and austerities (*idaong te na atapaskaya na abhaktaya kadacana*<sup>91</sup>).

We try to establish hegemony over this world with our individual efforts and will. An earnest spiritual seeker realizes at the end, that this will of us is meant to be **surrendered** to that supreme will, the Divine grace. This truth is quoted by a poet as- "our wills are ours; we know not how are will are ours, to make them Thine"<sup>92</sup>. This is the last music in the Gita.

**Sri Krishna, Krisnatva and Purushottama:** In the context of these sermons of Gita, advising all actions dedicated to Sri Krishna, it may be relevant to add that Sri Krishna has been perceived as the incarnation of God Himself in Srimad Bhagavad Gita. And His deliberations are to be construed as the personified divinity speaking through the medium of a mortal body, where the Krishna-hood or *Krishnatva* deliberating the principles of Srimad Bhagvad Gita, remain immortal as an eternal truth with assurance of enlightenment to the entire human race. The mortal body of Sri Krishna of course perished even before that of his friend and disciple Arjuna's. But *Krishnatva*, the divine **Krishna-consciousness** on life and message of Sri Krishna, as shined forth through the medium of that body, remain eternal and immortal with its grace of radiating enlightenment to all humanity in all ages.

In fact, the concept of *saccidananda* as stated in *vedas* (as *brahman* propounded by the *rishis*) has been visualised as *saccidananda Krishna* in *puranas* of which Gita is a part only<sup>93</sup>. Such *Saccidananda Krishna*, speaking of His own self said- *na tadasti vina yatsyat maya bhutam caracaram*<sup>94</sup> - there is nothing in the world, whether moving or unmoving, that can exist without Me. Sri Krishna being identified with God- *Brahman*, He (*Krishnatva*) is the only one reality which is infinite and immortal in this changing world. If that divine reality is taken away, the world becomes non-existent, unreal, zero<sup>95</sup>. Truly speaking, this universe is a tiny bit of that divine energy manifesting as the multiplicity.<sup>96</sup>

Sri Krishna also adds, *Aham ksaramtitah aksarat api ca uttamah, atah loke bede ca prathitah asmi purusottamah*<sup>97</sup> - "since I (*Krishnatva* or Krishna-consciousness) am beyond the perishable (*ksara*), and even excel the imperishable(*aksara*); therefore I am well-known as the supreme being, *purusottama*<sup>98</sup>. It is implied that *brahman* (infinite reality consciousness and bliss eternal) has been termed as *aksara*, the imperishable- which of course transcends the *ksara*, the perishable - the gross world. Sri Krishna, the incarnation of God in human form suggesting to be transcending that *aksara* as well (still higher supremely good *purushottama*), implies that the only way we can approach this abstract concept of *brahman* (*nirguna brahman*), would only be possible through this concept of *purushottama*, to whom we can bestow our *bhakti*, divine love, envisioning *saccidananda* as *purushottama*<sup>99, 100</sup>. It may be added here as a simily, that we can see light, only when it gets reflected upon an object- wherefrom it can shine forth. Thus we need *purushottama* to fix our mind upon Him, and worship with supreme faith and devotion. Speaking on the way of such devotion Sri Krishna adds that - *moyye manah abesya nityajucta je mum upasyte te me juctatama matah*<sup>101</sup> - those who worship Me fixing their mind upon Me with constant devotion and supreme faith, are considered to be the best *yogins*, devotees. On the other side it would be quite difficult, for attainment of realization on impersonal *nirguna brahman* (the abstract concept *brahman* with no attributes) for the embodied ones-ourselves having body consciousness<sup>102</sup>. That is why *bhakti*, divine love is the universal form of religion all over the world. A handful of people can only succeed in realization, if at all, taking recourse to **only** through abstract *jnana* path (*nirguna brahman* etc.)<sup>103</sup>.

As an infinite mass of formless water of the vast ocean can also take definite shape and form, when it condenses to icebergs at cool places in the ocean; like that *aksara*, *Nirguna brahma*, can also take shape and form with the intense love, *bhakti* of the devotees<sup>104</sup>. Formless water if taken as *nirguna brahman*, then the icebergs with shapes and forms could be considered as *saccidananda krishna*, the *purushottama*, whom we can bestow our love and worship as the incarnation of God in human form.

Sri Krishna also proclaimed- *dharma song sthapanarthaya sambhabami yuge yuge*<sup>105</sup> - I (God in human form) come into being from age to age for establishment of *dharma* (on its decline) and thereby protect and establish the truth dispelling the falsity. Thus believers and folowers of Srimad Bhagvad Gita, do not hesitate to find the same Sri Krishna appearing in later period as Buddha or, Jesus, or all those who are considered as *Yuga purusa*, *Avatara*, incarnation of God- whosoever opens up the flood gate of spirituality in the society overcoming the materialistic or other odds coming in its way.

Sri Krishna also says- *je jatha mang prapadyante tang aham tatha iba bhajami, manusyah sarbasah mama bartam anubartante*<sup>106</sup> - by whatever way men worship Me, even so I accept them; for in all ways, it is in My path only that people tread in various ways. It implies harmony of all religions- giving credence to the acceptance of all religion in reaching the same truth. Srimad Bhagvad Gita teaches this harmony of all religion, over which Sri Ramakrishna, the *Yuga purusa* of the present age of global village, declared from his own realization by following the different practices of different religions -(different

shades of Hindu religion, *Sanatan dharma*, Christianity as also Islam)- that all of them ultimately reach to the same truth<sup>107, 108</sup>.

Sri Krishna has also been said to be *sasvata dharma gopta*<sup>109</sup> - as the protector of the perennial religion, cosmic religion, continuing from ages to ages. It may be added in this context that in every religion of every country there are broadly two pillars of them. One is *yuga dharma* which is but the religion of the concerned age- detailing the rituals and local customs asked to be practised in the concerned society for a particular period of history, which is categorically termed *smriti*- which of course may change on demands of the society, time and place. The other is *sruti*, the perennial religion for spiritual growth, which is ever the same for every country in every religion in every age which is hence said as *sasvata dharma*, the cosmic religion, over which the mystics of every religion speak generally the same language, because they **realized the One** behind the many<sup>110</sup>. The message of Srimad Bhagvad Gita sings the music of that perennial religion, the *sasvata dharma*.

**Conclusion:** Srimad Bhagvad Gita gives a manual on the philosophy of life with a spirit of renunciation and selflessness, for manifesting the divinity innate in all human being, and thereby with spiritual growth is developed a vision of equanimity in social outlook and control over different levels of our emotions.

Srimad Bhagwad Gita elaborates the means of such manifestation of divinity within and thereby attaining immortality/perfection, by using any one or a combination of the four-fold paths, like- selfless work, pursuit of spiritual knowledge, love of God/devotion and/or, psychic control/meditation (*karma-yoga, jnana -yoga, bhakti-yoga, dhyana-yoga*).

One's assigned duty for the society, undertaken with a spirit of worship with deep involent mindfulness of the work alone, but absolutely devoid of any selfish design has been said to reap huge benefit for spiritual growth. In such efforts one should try to overcome inert laziness with dynamism totally effacing the self-gratification mindful of service to society as the worship to God, which in essence is one's own divinity appearing as many in the society. With a vision of God in everything, one should dedicate all actions with one pointed devotion to God, on disciplining the sense organs focussing God as the supreme goal. At the end comes surrendering everything to God, which comes only when one has grown strong spiritually; it should be the surrender of the strong, not surrender of the weak.

Sri Krishna has been perceived as the incarnation of God, which is our real self, immortal *Atman (brahman)*- the eternal all pervading reality consciousness and bliss. The universe in essence being viewed as the reflection of eternal *brahman* only, its creation is nothing but a projection with alternate manifestation and unmanifestation (masking and unmasking of God) continuing since eternity, the period of each being 4.32 billion years (NASA estimation of age of the earth is 4.50±50 million years).

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