

## **AN ANALYSIS FOR ROOT CAUSE OF SELF-DESTRUCTION - FROM BHAGAVAD GITA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*It is observed that the teachings of “Shrimad Bhagavad Gita” are very useful for all, particularly for finding out that the right actions and right path for destiny are decided. However, usually, we get upset with the results when they are not in accordance with our expectations. In fact, one is responsible for one’s own elevation or one’s own degradation. If the negative aspects are more dominant then the end results are obviously negative, which leads to the delay or destruction of one’s progress. Therefore, an attempt is made to investigate the factors responsible for self-destruction through exploring the scripture of Bhagavad Gita. In other words, the factors, which should not be practiced are extracted from the Bhagavad Gita and described herein for one’s betterment, by elimination of those factors from one’s life. Few of these factors identified and discussed herein are: (1) Affinity towards objects; (2) Lack of Spirit; (3) Pleasures & Lust; (4) Conduct; (5) Lack of Self-control; (6) Ignorance of Scriptures; (7) Path of Unrighteousness.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita, Bhagavad Gita, Kurukshetra*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Bhagavad Gita is a guide that consists of many aspects to understand and follow for one’s betterment in life. It is not just a philosophical or spiritual book, it is an educative text and is useful for all, as it consists of many life management principles applicable to our lives. The teachings of Bhagavad Gita are helpful to develop our personality and to elevate our lives. In the present world, there are many attractions are all around us, and we tend to divert our attention towards them and get distracted and forget our responsibilities. Many get confused due to this and, in this dynamic world, fail to choose the right path to achieve their goals. This is because of the passionate affinity and attachment towards something or someone. Also, this is due to the lack of clarity of mind and too much anxiety and worry regarding the end results. Because of all these factors, they lose their focus from the performance of their duties. Ultimately, these factors discourage their development and in fact become the cause of their degraded quality of life. These aspects are well defined and described in the Bhagavad Gita, but we need to practice, avoiding those negative factors, to elevate our personality for our betterment. Few of these factors are captured herein and discussed for the benefit of all, exploring the scripture of the Bhagavad Gita. Ultimately, it is one’s own choice whether to follow them or not, but these are the guiding principles explained in the Bhagavad Gita by the Lord, Krishna, to a great warrior, Arjuna, in the battlefield of Kurukshetra in the Mahabharata. The related Sanskrit verses are quoted for each aspect described herein for better understanding of all.

### Affinity Towards Objects

In the present days, the surroundings around us are so dynamic and influence all of us. There is a lot of competitiveness everywhere and in every field, and people are also ambitious to achieve something great. When it does not happen as per their wish, they lose their spirit at times. We all experience many times that we get angry and irritated over small incidents or non-issues. If we carefully analyze we would realize the futility of our emotional concern for the same., but we lose our temper because of our attachment towards a particular thing, or an issue, or a person. All those actions and behaviors are because of our strong wish and desire towards the above-mentioned things and our expectations thereof. In the below shloka, it is mentioned how we lose our intelligence and degrade ourselves by too much affinity or attraction towards an object, an issue or a person, which further gives rise to many inherent weakness leading to self-destruction ultimately.

dhyayato Vishayanpumsaha Sanghtseshupajayathe

sansghath samjayathe kaamaha kaamathkrodhobhijayathe (2.62)

krodhadhbhavathi sammohaha sammohathsmruthivibrhamaha

smruthibhramsad buddhinaaso budhinaasaathpranasyathi (2.63)

In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna describes that, “while contemplating the objects of the senses, a person develops attachment for them. From such attachment, springs up desire and if the desire is unfulfilled, anger arises. From anger, complete delusion arises and from delusion, confusion of memory and from that intelligence is lost. When intelligence is lost, one falls from his position and goes to complete ruin”.

In all, the self-destruction is because of our own attitude, temper and due to not having mind and sense control to act in the right way. This happens if we focus on attractions and develop attachment towards them. Ultimately, such affinity towards the sense objects leads to depression in many people if they are not achieved. They lose their mental balance because of a spoilt life. Success and failure should be treated equally and one should not be too much attached to the attractions and should not get upset with the results if they do not succeed. Rather getting obsessed with objects, ideally, we must work and put forth our sincere efforts in the right direction, so that the end results are taken care of. It is important to analyze ourselves, our thinking pattern and to avoid repetition of such actions by us, which will be helpful for self-development. To have mind control from various attractions, it is necessary to practice sense control and emotional detachment to avoid such temptations. Practice of mind and sense control leads to detachment from various objects and we can elevate our life to a betterment

### Lack of Spirit

The challenges are very common for everyone in the present days and inner strength is the only need to face the results. One should treat the success or the failure in the same spirit. However, the efforts should be in the right direction for success, but without expecting the results. In that case, one should be ready for even a failure. Because of the lack of spirit and lack of self-confidence, leaving the job is not the remedial action but facing the situation boldly certainly is. One should be even ready for the failure, but should be taken in the right spirit and should put right efforts on the job. Even a talented person can fail if the required efforts and spirit are lacking. The duty is something more important than the end results, and the person in charge should be full of action, spirit and energy. In the battlefield, Arjuna, one of the five Pandavas in Mahabharatha, lost his spirit, as he was to fight with his own people. Arjuna did not want to fight with his

enemies, though they were the evil doers and unethical, as all of them were his own people = relatives, teachers and friends. In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna explained (Verse 2.3 and 2.38) to Arjuna saying that, “don’t yield to impotency. It is not right for you. Give up such faintheartedness. Stand-up and get ready. By treating equal and alike – victory or defeat, gain or loss, pleasure or pain – get ready for battle. In this way, you will never incur any sin”. This shows how Arjuna lost his spirit of energy and became weak to pursue his duty because of his emotions and worry. In spite of being a great and talented warrior, he lost his dynamism and leadership ability. He was unable to take the right decision. The root cause for his mental inability to think or perform his duty was because of the emotional attachment towards his relatives, teachers and friends, which resulted in lack of spirit to perform his action. If Arjuna abandoned the battle, he would be committing an infamous act. Because of that, Krishna said, the attitude of Arjuna did not fit his personality, as he was a warrior. Lord Krishna told Arjuna to fight for the sake of fighting because the battle is his duty and in view of that there should neither be any considerations of happiness or distress, nor victory or defeat, for a warrior like Arjuna.

klaibhyam maa sma gamaha parth naithathvayyupapadyathe|

kshudram hridayadourbalyam tyakthvoththishtta paranthama|| (2.3)

sukhaduhkhe same krutva labhalabhhou jayajayou|

thatho yudhaya yujysva naivam papamavapsyasi|| (2.38)

Many times, we may not like to do certain things but if duty is considered, we ought to perform and for that we should not leave our spirit to act on such activities. Without spirit, one cannot achieve the goal and therefore the factors responsible for lacking of our spirit must be identified and should work upon them to regain our own spirit and energy to proceed rightly to reach our destiny.

### **Pleasures & Lust**

Many people consume time in enjoyment and do not take up the work useful for self-elevation. Once the time passes experiencing those pleasures, many people learn the facts and worry over the time spent and gone in enjoyment. The pleasures usually lead to habituate a person with mad attractions and strong desires. During the course of time, the lust that is the strong desire for something arises and the actual duty or the desired responsibility is forgotten. When lust is the only thing that remains with the person, the actions and the character gets damaged, and the person loses his significance. Hence, these are the factors responsible for the destruction of a person if not controlled in time. Lord Krishna explained in the Bhagavad Gita in verses 5.22 and 3.38 that, “the pleasures which are born of sense – contacts are undoubtedly only a source of suffering. They come and go and are not permanent. Therefore, the wise man does not delight in them. As fire is covered by smoke, as a mirror is covered by dirt, as the embryo is covered by the womb, so is the wisdom covered by lust”.

ye hi samsparsaja bhogaa dukhayonaya yevathe|

aadhyanthavanthaha kountheya na theshu ramathe budhaha|| (5.22)

dhoomenaavriyathe vahniryathaadarso malena cha|

yatholbenaavrutho garbhashtatha thenedamaavrutham|| (3.38)

We must clean our own impurities of mind from time to time and shine our wisdom. Even an intellect, if unable to purify his candidature, loses his character. Because of these factors, lust takes predominance of character and one gives importance to pleasures only. Ultimately, this leads to self-degradation without any elevation in life.

### Conduct

The negativity in our own thoughts, actions and temper leads to damage in our lives. It is important to know the factors and analyze them, which causes negative outcome of our actions. The Bhagavad Gita, well explained about these qualities of a person having a demoniac nature. In fact, it is told in the Bhagavad Gita that people having these negative qualities explain about their character. Verses 16/4) and 16/10 of the Bhagavad Gita explained that, “Pride, arrogance, conceit, anger, harshness and ignorance – are the hallmarks of the person, who is born with demoniac properties. Taking the shelter of insatiable lust and having the conceit of pride and false prestige, taking up wrong deeds, being influenced by illusion and mad attraction towards impermanent things – are the symptoms of demoniac nature of a person, who moves in the world with impure conduct and arrogance”.

dambho darpobhimanashcha krodhahparushyamevacha|  
ajnanam chabhijathasya partha sampadamasureem|| (16.4)

kaamaashritya dushpuram dambhamanmadaavnithaha|  
mohaadgruhithvaasadurgahanpravarthantheasuchivrathaha|| (16.10)

People who do not follow the principles become insignificant and earn infamy all around throughout their life. They go on increasing their insatiable lust and they possess unclean habits. How can one think of elevation in life without degradation, having all these negative qualities within? Therefore, one should know, what should be followed and what should not be for the betterment in life.

### Lack of Self-Control

The senses are important for all our actions. At the same time, how we bring them within our control is important, otherwise they will take us nowhere. How to use them rightly is a matter of individual ability. If they are not under our control, we do wrong deeds and we ourselves become responsible for our damage, how it is very difficult to control them. In the verse 2/60 of the Bhagavad Gita, it is told that, “the senses are so strong that they forcibly carry away the mind of even a wise person, who practices sense control”.

yathatho hyapi kountheya purushasya vipaschithaha|  
indriyani pramatheeni haranthi prasabham manaha|| (2.60)

The mind is restless and very difficult to curb the restless mind. Even the learned men, philosophers and sages try to conquer the senses but in spite of that sometimes fall victim to sense enjoyment due to an agitated mind. Therefore, it is very difficult to control the mind and senses, but as per Lord Krishna, it is possible to control by practice and detachment. It is well defined in the Bhagavad Gita that it is important to control and safeguard the mind and senses from attractions and pleasures, which are impermanent and otherwise lead to self-degradation. The senses are very important and are

essential to perform such kind of actions so as to elevate a person, and therefore it is of utmost importance to have control on them.

### **Ignorance of Scriptures**

Knowledge is the real property for each to lead life happily, to create or develop things for the welfare of all. Education comes through learning, reading and following the standard books and scriptures. The behavior and practices are also equally important to have better health and life. However, many follow as per their wish and avoid studying and following those procedures described in those standard texts. For few, it is because of the lack of knowledge and for few it is because of their negligence and ignorance of those aspects described in those texts due to their wrong attitude. In the Bhagavad-Gita, it is told in verse 16.23 that, “one who discards the injunctions of the scriptures, who acts in an arbitrary way as per his own will, such a person will neither attain the stage of perfection nor experience any happiness nor achieve the ultimate goal of life or destination”. Hence, lack of interest in studying those scriptures and lack of understanding and following those guidelines is another root cause for self-destruction.

yahshastravidhimutrusjya varthathe kamakaratah |

na sa sidhimavapnothi na sukham na paramgathim||

(16.23)

Therefore, to understand what is duty and what is not, the scriptures are the guidelines. Knowing such rules and regulations from the scriptures, one should perform the duty as per those guidelines for gradual elevation in life, otherwise destruction is obvious. In all, education is important and the most important point is to understand and follow the right procedures for betterment. In the human form of life, a living entity is expected to follow the procedures and regulations as described in standard texts for elevating his life to the highest platform, but if he does not follow those right procedures and morals, he degrades himself, neither he can purify himself nor attain the stage of happiness, nor can walk on the right path for the betterment in life.

### **Path of Unrighteousness**

The identity of a person depends on his or her actions, moral values and character. How he behaves and how he acts matters for his progress. However, many do not follow the values and do not lead the right path with good character. In fact, they do all jobs with a selfish motive, even at the cost of other’s progress or damaging others, for their own welfare. Such people believe in unrighteous activities for their benefit. They do not have spiritual knowledge and do not try to reach the Supreme with their actions in the right path. Lord Krishna says that those people who follow the unrighteous path will never reach to him and that means never get liberated.

ashradhadhanaha purusha dharmasyasya paranthapa|

aprapy mam nivarthanthe mruthyusamsaarvarthmani||

(9.3)

Lord Krishna explained that “Those people who have no faith in the path of “Dharma”, which is called as righteousness, they cannot attain the supreme Lord. Therefore, they continue to revolve in the lifecycle of birth and death”. This means the importance of following the righteous path to attain the ultimate destiny is not understood by those people who follow the path of unrighteousness. It means those who follow unrighteousness as per their wish and wrong conduct will never reach their destiny. In all, here, the discussion is about one’s faith in the path of righteousness. The faithless

cannot have the moral values and only follow as per their will and cannot achieve the destiny. Even they do not get spiritual liberation and are neither useful for themselves nor others, as they follow the wrong practices and pathways, which leads to self-degradation in life. Therefore, faith in righteousness is most important for one's elevation in life with peace, happiness and enlightenment.

## CONCLUSIONS

For elevation of one's life, there are many aspects to follow and there are many aspects not to follow, but it is one's choice to choose and proceed. There are a few aspects described and warned against in the scripture – the Bhagavad Gita, and if someone chooses to follow those aspects, one can degrade easily and if they are not followed, one can elevate oneself in life to great heights. Affinity and attraction towards objects, lack of spirit with timidity, engagement of self in pleasures, having unclean habits and conduct, lacking in self-control, ignorance of scriptures and following the path of unrighteousness are the factors which can lead to self-destruction and hence one needs to be away from all of them with good practices and conduct for elevation in one's life.

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