

# How to live rest of the life: Self esteem, motivation and professional development

*Vedic ethical approach - Special reference to Srimadbhagavad-Gita*

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## Abstract:

“Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reaction. Do not fear.”

Sarva-dharman parityajya, Mam ekam saranam vraja

Aham tvam sarva-pape bhyo, Moksaisyami ma sucah (Gita 18/66),

The purpose of Bhagavat- Gita is to deliver mankind from the slavery of material existence. Every man is in difficulty in so many ways, as Arjuna also was in difficulty in having to fight the Battle of Kuruksetra with their own relatives. Not only Arjuna but every one of us is full of anxieties because of this material existence. When we see wonderful things happening in the cosmic nature, we should know that behind this cosmic manifestation there is a controller. Nothing could be manifested without being controlled. When we are materially contaminated, we are called conditioned. False consciousness is exhibited under the impression of that I am the product of Material nature. All Vedic knowledge is infallible. So Bhagavad-Gita contains the complete knowledge of Vedic wisdom. Indian philosophy of keeping mind and body for the well-being has entered the managerial domain of the world. The purpose of this paper is to develop an ethical motivational formula based on complete Vedic philosophy preached in the Bhagavad –Gita.

Motivation is the set of reasons that determines one to engage in a particular behavior. The term is generally used for human motivation but, theoretically, it can be used to describe the causes for animal behavior as well. This article refers to human motivation.

**Keywords:** Bhagya (destiny), Fight (perform your duties), Dharma (ethical action), maya (illusion), parityajya (to give up), sharanagatthi (surrender).

## INTRODUCTION

**Motivation** is the set of reasons that determines one to engage in a particular behaviour. The term is generally used for human motivation but, theoretically, it can be used to describe the causes for animal behaviour as well. This article refers to human motivation.

When we throw ourselves at the feet of God, We come under His protection, and from that time on there is no fear for us. When children are under the protection of their parents, they are fearless because they know that their parents will not let them be harmed. Mam eva prapadyante: Krsna promises that those who surrender to Him have no cause for fear.

If surrender unto Krsna is such an easy thing, then why don't people do it? Instead there are many who are challenging the very existence of God, claiming that nature and science are everything and that God is nothing. So-called advancement of civilization in knowledge means that the populace is becoming more mad. Instead of being cured, the disease is being increased. People do not care for God, but they care for nature, and it is nature's business to give kicks in the form of the threefold miseries. She is always administrating these kicks twenty-four hours a day. However, we have become so accustomed to being kicked that we think it is all right and consider it to be the ordinary course of things. We have become very proud of our education, but we tell material nature, "Thank you very much for kicking me. Now please continue." Thus deluded, we think that we have even conquered material nature. But how is this so? Nature is still inflicting upon us the miseries of birth, old age, disease and death. Has any one solved these problems? Then what advancement have we really made in knowledge and conquered. This is called maya. civilization we are under the stringent rules of material nature, but still we are thinking that we have won the race. Indian philosophy of keeping mind and body for the well being has entered the managerial domain of the world. The purpose of this paper is to develop a motivation theory based on the philosophy preached in the The Bhagwad Geeta. One of the greatest contributions of India to the world is Holy Gita which is considered to be one of the first revelations from God. It cannot be encompassed in the narrow limits of religion or even philosophy. It provides all that is needed to raise the consciousness of man to the highest possible level and reveals the deep, universal truths of life that speak to the needs and aspirations of everyone. Arjuna got mentally depressed when he saw his relatives with whom he had to fight. To motivate him the Bhagavad Gita is preached in the battlefield of Kurukshetra by Lord Krishna. Gita dispels the darkness of emotional breakdown in Arjuna.. He acts and he wins. A breakdown in finances, health, love, honour, prestige and values may make us an Arjuna. We may throw our weapons down and collapse under the crushing pressure of indecision. And here comes the Gita to rescue us, to make us stand up on our feet and to get

us ready to fight our way out of the crisis.

If we look around, most of the really big companies do take this whole motivation thing very seriously. They spend enormous amounts of money on trying to figure out the best way to keep their employees Charged up. They want employees who have zest for life, employees who believe that they can move mountains, employees who can make the impossible possible, employees who have fire in their bellies and don't have to take an antacid because of it later. But the common problem in organizations is – disgruntled coffee-spilling work-shirking malingerers whose middle names are Complacency and Catastrophe. In the present world, with the disarray of modern times, inertia leads to self- destruction. And what is sad is that it is not that they don't have talent. It is just that they are apathetic towards their work and other things in general. Why? The reason is that we have become materially contaminated. We have become result oriented. Every one of us is full of anxieties because of this result oriented attitude. Unless and until we are shown a carrot or a stick, we do not have any interest in any assignment.

## PERSPECTIVE OF THE BHAGWAD GITA

Now let us analyze the motivation from the perspective of The Bhagwad Geeta. There is one major difference between the approach of The Bhagwad Geeta and all the theories referred to so far. While current and prevailing management thought too often deals with problems at extrinsic or intrinsic reward oriented, and material levels, the Bhagavad Gita tackles the issues from the grass roots level of human thinking. Once the basic thinking of man is improved, it will automatically motivate him and enhance the quality of his actions and their results. The despondent position of Arjuna in the first chapter of the Gita is a typical human situation which may come in the life of all men of action some time or other. We stand miserable, indecisive and fearful. Sri Krishna by sheer power of his inspiring words raised the level of Arjuna's mind from the state of inertia to the state of righteous action, from the state of faithlessness to the state of faith and self-confidence in the ultimate victory of Dharma (ethical action). They are the powerful words of courage of strength, of self confidence, of faith in one's own infinite power, of the glory, of valour in the life of active people and of the need for intense calmness in the midst of intense action. The Bhagwad Geeta's motivation stand on four pillars. The stronger the pillars, the stronger will be intensity and persistency in the right direction. (Stephen. P. Robins) let us take the four pillars one by one:

### KARMA YOGA (THE ACTIONLESS ACTION)

This action less action must not be taken as a fatalistic approach leading to inaction and the dynamic teachings of the Gita must not be misunderstood. Bhagya should not become the keyword in the lives of the masses, consequently bringing defeats, insults and embarrassments. Laziness should not overshadow the desire for a better quality of life. Karma is a fundamental law of nature It is very essential to understand Karma in its true sense. Any word, any action, any thought that produces an effect is called a karma. Thus the law of karma means the law of causation. One must undertake one's duties and face one's responsibilities- boldly, squarely and intelligently. We must never be dull, lethargic or fatalistic. 'Don't abandon your righteous performance, propriety and faith; else you will land in the wilderness of fear and the emptiness of frustration' (Vivekananda S) We must rise to the occasion and act....skillfully.

'Yogah Karmasu Kaushlam' (Gita 2/50),

The work should be done with dexterity, artistically, in harmony with the environs and by and large for the benefit of all Creation. This can be achieved by balanced thinking, a forceful and planned attitude and deep concentration on the goal, an efficient mindset and unwavering commitment without the fear of failure. "Karma in its effect on character is the most tremendous power that man has to deal with." (Vivekananda Swami) Every work we do, every movement of our body, every thought we think, leaves such an impression on the mind; and even when these impressions are not obvious on the surface, they are sufficiently strong to work beneath the surface, subconsciously. What we are at every moment is determined by the sum total of these impressions in the mind. This is really what is meant by character. We should pay particular attention to the small actions of daily life. These are more telling than big heroic or public deeds. Our most common actions, the private thoughts, words and deeds, which we think no one sees or hears, form our character. The first step in karma-yoga is simply to do one's duty. Yet duty- dharma- cannot be pinned down to a specific code of conduct because the actions that comprise duty are different in one culture, time or circumstances than in another. Indeed, clinging to duty as a rigid set of rules can make one into a kind of robot. To give an objective definition of duty is thus impossible. One must follow one's own way of life and the Law of Righteous Living (dharma) and perform his duty rather than wish to follow another's way of life, howsoever tempting it may appear.

That is what Sri Krishna says to Arjuna in *niyatam kuru karma tvam karma jyayo hyakarmanah sarira-yatrapi ca te na prasiddhyed akarmanah* (Gita 3.8),

Translation:

Perform your prescribed duty, for doing so is better than not working. One cannot even maintain one's physical body without work. Although we think of duty as something that ties us down, Vivekananda claims that acting with a right understanding of duty leads to freedom. He equates 'freedom' with 'perfect equilibrium,' or what the Christians call the 'peace that passeth understanding,' and it can be found only in rising above the limits of self. For those of us who are not yet selfless, however, the 'only way to grow is to do the duty near at hand, and thus go on gathering strength till the highest state is reached.' Vivekananda says that the self-restraint required even to do this 'duty near at hand' helps us gather the power to progress spiritually. He makes his point with a surprising

illustration; he compares a cannon ball that flies a long way and eventually falls to the ground versus one that hits a wall and explodes, the latter has a lot more power. Duty is easiest to fulfill when motivated by love. Duty is seldom sweet. It is only when love greases its wheels that it runs smoothly; otherwise it is a continuously friction. How else could parents do their duties to their children? Do we not meet with friction every day in our lives? Duty is sweet only through love, and love shines alone in freedom. It is in this light that the counsel 'yogah karmasu kausalam' should be understood. Kausalam means skill or method or technique of work which is an indispensable component of Work ethic. The Gita teaches us to act, and to act vigorously, in this world. Unfortunately, misinterpretations of the Gita have harmed the ignorant masses, leading to inactivity, rampant poverty, fatalism, and lethargic dullness in the name of abandonment of action. The Gita actually takes a positive, dynamic, balanced and composed approach to the problems of life.

So, Work we must, and with full zeal and vigour. Furthermore, dexterity in one's action and expertise in performance are attributes of Karma Yoga. Performance is needed for worldly systems, and it is a way to realisation as well. Running away from problems and challenges of the world is no renunciation. Every particle in the universe is in a state of motion and action. This is the law of nature. So, one must act, and act intelligently, detached and fearless, devoted to Karma Yoga. The performance of action is a prerequisite for our sustenance.

## THE RIGHT TO ACT BUT NEVER TO ITS FRUITS

The second pillar of motivation is The Right to Act But Never to Its Fruits. The whole crux of the motivation can be summed up in the shloka:

'karmanyevadhikaraste ma phalesu kadachana, ma karmaphalaheturbhuma te sangostvakarmani.' (Srimadbhagavad Geeta 2.47)

One of the key aphorisms in the Gita states: 'You have the right to act but not to its fruits; therefore, do not hanker for the fruits of action, but also do not get attached to inaction.' The question is how to inculcate work commitment without caring for the result which goes against all the prevalent theories taught in our B schools. We should not worry about the fruits, results whereas all the theories on motivation are result oriented. No doubt, expectation of the fruits of our toil is natural, without which there may be lack of zeal to work. But all of us have the experience that obsessive focus on rewards creates over-anxiety, nerve shattering worries, sleepless nights, melancholy, depression and loss of inner calmness leading to dissipation of happiness and drain of energy so essential for proper work. If one always dreams or has strong longings for the fruits of his action, the resultant agitation, anxiety, worries and disturbance further mars one's success and cause dissipation of vital energy in futile exercise. Fear of failure dissipates concentration and focus that is an essential ingredient for success. Result oriented attitude affects the performance by making us anxious- making us physically and mentally weak. Moreover, we have to readjust our bearings in this regard. Working only with an eye to the anticipated benefits, means that the quality of performance of the current job or duty suffers - through mental agitation of anxiety for the future. In fact, the way the world works means that events do not always respond positively to our calculations and hence expected fruits may not always be forthcoming. The emphasis of negation should be on the anxiety about the outcome, not on the goal, the action, the motivation and the ultimate achievement. Hence, the Gita advises us not to worry about the outcome of our action, which is beyond our control and act forcefully, intelligently, and untiringly, without losing our peace of mind. Aim at your goal with steady concentration, focus only on the bull's eye-and shoot. Don't tremble in advance thinking about failing or winning. This is the Yoga of Action. So, the Gita tells us not to mortgage present commitment to an uncertain future. Cultivating this understanding by a manager would lead him to emancipation from falsifying state of confusion and distortion, to a state of pure and free mind wherefrom he can prove his effectiveness in discharging whatever duties that have fallen to his domain .

The driving forces in today's rat-race are speed and greed as well as ambition and competition. The natural fallout of these forces is erosion of one's ethico-moral fibre which supersedes the value system. Although these practices are taken as normal business hazards for achieving progress, they always end up as a pursuit of mirage -the more the needs the more the disappointments. This phenomenon may be called as yayati-syndrome. In Mahabharata we come across a king called Yayati who, in order to revel in the endless enjoyment of flesh exchanged his old age with the youth of his obliging youngest son for a mythical thousand years. However, he lost himself in the pursuit of sensual enjoyments and felt penitent. He came back to his son pleading to take back his youth. This yayati syndrome shows the conflict between externally directed acquisitions, motivations and inner reasoning, emotions and conscience.

One has a right to work, to act and to act with all his vigour, but he does not possess the right to the outcome of his action. Thus, expectations should be surrendered to the will of the Supreme. One must not be unhappy or sorrowful, even if the results are unfavourable. That is not your right, besides not being in your hands. However dexterously one acts to achieve them, desirable achievements may elude man.

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The principle of reducing our attachment to personal gains from the work done or controlling the aversion to personal losses enunciated in Ch.2 Verse 47 of the Gita is the foolproof prescription for attaining equanimity. The common apprehension about this principle that it will lead to lack of incentive for effort and work, striking at the very root of work ethic, is not valid because the advice is to be judged as relevant to man's overriding quest for true mental happiness. Thus while the common place theories on motivation lead us to bondage, the Gita theory takes us to freedom and real happiness.

Vivekananda says that selfish action is the work of a slave. We are slaves of our desires, bound in the chains of our own selfishness. The whole gist of this teaching is that you should work as a master, not as a slave; work incessantly, but do not do slaves' work. Ninety nine per cent of mankind work like slaves and the result is misery; it is all selfish work. Work through freedom! .... Love never comes until there is freedom According to Vivekananda; these principles apply regardless of which belief system or spiritual discipline a person may follow, or indeed whether one believes in God or not. One way is for those who do not believe in God or in any outside help. They are left to their own devices; they have simply to work with their own will, with the powers of their mind and discrimination, thinking, "I must be non-attached. 'for those who believe in God there is another way, which is much less difficult. They give up the fruits of work unto the Lord; they work but never feel attached to the results. Whatever they see, feel, hear. Or do is for Him.

I', 'me', and 'mine' have become the causes of grave mental diseases these days. We always think that we are the 'doers', the 'achievers', and the 'possessors'. But on deeper contemplation it is revealed that none of these conditions exists in reality. They are a mirage of our mind- always changing, shifting, appearing and disappearing. It is the combination of innumerable strings in the array of happenings that apparently makes us a 'doer', 'achievers', and 'possessors'- that too, prone to continued vacillation. Nature controls its system. Ego coated pride is painful in the end. An enlightened person will not behave like a high-headed egotist although he performs several acts- voluntary or involuntary- through senses of the body, or by mind and intellect. Peace belongs to him who lives in harmony with himself as well as the world, without being lost in it. According to The Gita, succeed you must in materialistic achievement but through an intelligent approach. Performance for worldly fulfilment with a detached attitude towards the outcome makes the ego a friendly supporter. Your mind becomes calm and suitable for further contemplation and, ultimately, the Yoga of Renunciation is achieved through wise actions. Also, if one acquires quietude of mind and the right method of thinking, one reaches the top of the ladder of success in whatever field of activity he is engaged in. The central idea of this aphorism is toward performing one's duty selflessly, wisely and skillfully. The ego of the doer ship must be laid at His feet; subsequently, attachment to expected fruits would automatically be dissolved. Thus did Krishna enlighten Arjuna, who ultimately acquired this Karma

## ETHICS IN INDIA

In the Vedas, Samhitas talked of ritam and rinam cosmic order and man's obligation to the order, Upnishads and gita developed two concepts on the basis of the above.

- (1) Dharma- It is the primary principle supporting the universe and is also the philosophic speculation based on empirical experience about the absolute.
- (2) Karma- every action is karma and it brings reaction in course of time.

When life blood is strong and pure, no disease germ can live in the body. Our life-blood is spirituality. If it flows clear, if it flows strong and pure and vigorous, everything is right; political, social, any other material defects, even the poverty of the land, will all be cured if that blood is pure.

Sri Auribindo expresses his views as

The Gita is written in plain terms and professes to solve the great ethical and spiritual difficulties which the life of man raises, and it will not do to go behind this plain language and thought and wrest them to the service of our fancy. But there is this much of truth in the view, that the setting of the doctrine though not symbolical, is certainly typical.

For management to be perfect and really rewarding for all concerned, it is very important that foreign ideologies do not dominate the life of the manager and the system of management that connects him with his field of responsibility. Therefore in the motivation of managers the consideration of cultural and ethical values must be taken into account.

The holistic value of Natural Law handles the holistic value of culture –universal-culture – whereas specific values of different Laws of Nature are concerned with the specific culture of and individual country or the specific area of a country; these are the Laws of Nature that give rise to the specific geographic and climatic conditions, accents of speech, languages, and trends of society on all levels of life-spiritual, social and material

Motivation in every country should fundamentally be based on the cultural and ethical values of the country, and on this ground of the spontaneous ability to maintain cultural values, the use of modern tools and techniques of communication will be sufficient to compete and come out successful in the local, national, and international competitive market.

## CONCLUSION

Yoga, the actionless action. You cannot bring in personal effectiveness when you are identified. The message of the Gita is- don't get identified, don't get attached, not even to the result. You be focussed focus on the present right now, and when you get focused on the present without getting attached, a different order of intelligence happens and that intelligence motivates you to do your best and it becomes your nature to always do best and this motivation is a permanent one. Attaining this state of nishkama karma is the right attitude to work because it prevents the ego, the mind from dissipation through speculation on future gains or losses. The work must be done with detachment.' This is because it is the Ego which spoils the work. If this is not the backbone of the Theory of Motivation which the modern scholars talk about what else is it? "Work must be done with detachment." It is the ego that spoils work and the ego is the centerpiece of most theories of motivation. Identification expresses attachment and throughout the Gita the Lord says to Arjuna, be detached.

"Tasmat asaktaha satatam karyam karma samachara"

therefore Arjuna, with a sense of detachment continue your activities. Fight also with detachment, he says. A surgeon has to be detached. One thing is very important here. Being detached does not mean being unconcerned. Please don't understand it wrongly. People say detached means that I should not bother. No, you be concerned. Being concerned and being worried and attached are different things altogether. If a surgeon identifies a child as his child, it is very difficult for him to do surgery. But for the neighbor's child he will do it. Not that he will be careless, but then he is not identified. When he is not identified, his effectiveness is enhanced. For your own child, you are capable of doing it, but because of the identity of "my child", "I" and "mine," you suffer. You observe a good sportsman when playing sports, he just focuses on the game and he is not attached to the audience, whether they are clapping or not clapping. He has to dis-identify with the audience, focus on his game and even more, he has to focus on the moment, not even thinking of what the next game is going to be. The shot he is hitting is what he is totally focused on. When he is totally focused, in that space a different order of excellence will happen and therefore, the world of objects appears to be larger than the internal world of "I" and "Mine." Bhagavad Gita is full of advice on the theory of cause and effect, making the doer responsible for the consequences of his deeds. The Gita, while advising detachment from the avarice of selfish gains by discharging one's accepted duty, does not absolve anybody of the consequences arising from discharge of his responsibilities. 'The Great Indian poet, Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941, known as "Gurudev") says working for love is freedom in action. A concept which is described as "disinterested work" in the Gita where Sri Krishna says, "He who shares the wealth generated only after serving the people, through work done as a sacrifice for them, is freed from all sins. On the contrary those who earn wealth only for themselves, eat sins that lead to frustration and failure." Therefore surrender the action as well as its result unto Nature- an expression of the Almighty. Liberate yourself from anxiety, worry, disturbing thoughts and agitation about tomorrow, and fly free after performing conscientiously. This shall cleanse your mind of clutter and make it serene and balanced.

Equipose: The equipose of the mind, even under crushing pressure of dualities is Yoga. Krishna asks us neither to rejoice in success nor in failure weep. We need to understand this. Neither do you rejoice in success nor in failure do you weep, you do your duty and leave the rest to the divine. This surrender (sharanagatthi) attitude is going to be explained in Bhakti Yoga. The Gita is going to say, be centered, be calm and be non-addictive towards both success and failure, "Siddhihi asidhiyo samo bhootva," siddhi, success; asidhi, failure; samo bhootva, be centered, be calm in both. It is one of the most beautiful teachings for personal excellence. If the result of sincere effort is a success, the entire credit should not be appropriated by the doer alone. If the result of sincere effort is a failure, then too the entire blame does not accrue to the doer.

The former attitude mollifies arrogance and conceit while the latter prevents excessive despondency, de-motivation and self-pity. Thus both these dispositions safeguard the doer against psychological vulnerability, the cause of the modern managers' companions of diabetes, high blood pressure and ulcers.

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