

Understanding Love and Sense of Belongingness from the perspective of Holy Gita

Dr. Radhika¹, Dr. Ashu Dhawan^{2*}, Saijel³

ABSTRACT

Bhagavad Gita is a famous and admired ancient scripture of the Indian subcontinent. It is widely considered a storehouse of spiritual knowledge. This review paper explores the various ways in which psychologists have studied the Holy Gita and provided concepts that can contribute to love, and a sense of belonging. This paper presents study on teachings of the Bhagavad Gita that are very easy to understand and apply in normal life. Human survival is majorly affected by various basic needs. In these needs, need for love and need to belong are the essential ones. This review paper explores the various ways in which psychologists have studied the Holy Gita and provided concepts that can contribute to understand love, and sense of belonging as a basic human need. Bhagavad Gita is very easy to understand and apply in normal life. The beauty of Holy Gita resides in its simplicity, as it doesn't require any academic mastery. Following the messages of Holy Gita will surely incorporate love and sense of belongingness in our lives.

Keywords: *Love, Sense of Belongingness, Holy Gita*

The Bhagavad Gita, often referred to as the Gita, is a sacred Hindu scripture that holds immense spiritual significance. Composed in ancient India, it is a profound dialogue between Lord Krishna, an incarnation of God, and Arjuna, a warrior prince who finds himself in a moral dilemma on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. With its origins dating back thousands of years, the Bhagavad Gita is considered a treasure trove of wisdom and guidance, addressing existential questions, moral dilemmas, and the nature of life itself. It encompasses various philosophical concepts, such as duty (dharma), righteousness, devotion, and the ultimate path to self-realization.

The Gita provides deep insights into the human psyche, exploring themes of inner conflict, faith, and the pursuit of knowledge. It offers practical guidance on how to live a purposeful and virtuous life while grappling with the challenges presented by one's circumstances and personal choices. Renowned for its universal teachings, the Bhagavad Gita transcends religious boundaries, offering valuable lessons to people of all backgrounds.

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Govt. College, Hisar

²Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra

³Student, Department of Psychology, Kurukshetra University Kurukshetra

*Corresponding Author

Received: December 31, 2023; Revision Received: January 29, 2024; Accepted: February 03, 2024

Understanding Love and Sense of Belongingness from the perspective of Holy Gita

Its verses have inspired countless individuals to seek spiritual enlightenment, find solace in times of struggle, and strive for self-improvement. “Parallel Paths: Examining the Synergies between Psychology and the Holy Gita” The Bhagavad Gita, a spiritual and philosophical text, holds several parallels with principles found in psychology. The Gita delves into the complexities of human nature, exploring concepts such as the nature of the mind, inner conflict, and the pursuit of self-realization. Similarly, psychology delves into the workings of the human mind, addressing issues such as cognitive dissonance, motivation, and the quest for self-actualization.

One of the key themes in the Bhagavad Gita is the battle between different aspects of the self, symbolized by Arjuna’s moral dilemma on the battlefield. This inner conflict mirrors psychological theories related to internal struggles and the human capacity for self-deception. Moreover, the Gita’s teachings on controlling the mind and cultivating inner peace resonate with psychological approaches to mindfulness and cognitive-behavioral therapy. Additionally, the Gita emphasizes the importance of understanding one’s own nature and fulfilling one’s duty (dharma), which aligns with psychological theories related to individual identity, moral development, and the pursuit of meaningful goals.

The Gita’s emphasis on self-awareness, discipline, and the power of positive thinking also finds resonance with psychological concepts related to self-regulation, resilience, and the impact of attitudes on behavior. Furthermore, the Bhagavad Gita’s teachings on the nature of suffering, attachment, and the pursuit of lasting happiness bear resemblance to psychological theories on coping strategies, emotional resilience, and the pursuit of eudaimonic well-being. Both the Gita and psychology offer insights into the complexities of human experience and provide guidance for navigating the challenges of life while striving for personal growth and fulfillment.

Psychology is the science of understanding human behavior. One way to understand the Gita in psychology is to compare the mentioned dialogues with different psychological concepts (Reddy 2012). Bhatia et al. (2013) said that the Gita is one of the oldest documented cognitive behavioral therapy in which Lord Krishna is a true psychotherapist and Arjuna is the man in conflict. It can be inferred that Arjuna was having negative automatic thoughts and several distortions in cognition, including catastrophizing and depersonalization. The overall message is a type of psycho-education for people having anxiety.

Sharma (2014) documented the conflict resolution approach used by Lord Krishna in the war zone. , Phogat et al. (2020) focused the psychotherapeutic derivation of Holy Gita. Bhatia et al. (2013) identify elements within Gita that may be similar to interpersonal therapy (IPT), such as an emphasis on re-establishing interests and relationships that can help patients cope with grief. The emphasis on role transformation and building self-esteem are other similarities that have been identified between IPT and the approach used by Lord Krishna with Arjuna. Also, some researchers consider Gita to represent the first documented session of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT). It has been proposed that REBT, which was first introduced into psychology by Albert Ellis (1957), and Gita both encourage individuals to pursue happiness and recognize that although humans have limitations, they can grow within them. Both also believe that people are self-determined and create their own mental well-being (Bhosale, 2015).

Albert Ellis (1954) had proposed additional love varieties: “Love itself . . . includes many different types and degrees of affection, such as conjugal love, parental love, familial love,

Understanding Love and Sense of Belongingness from the perspective of Holy Gita

religious love, love of humanity, love of animals, love of things, self-love, sexual love, obsessive-compulsive love, etc.” Sternberg (1998) has given a triangular theory of love, consisting: intimacy, passion, and commitment. The intimacy is basically emotion, passion is motivational in nature and commitment is cognitively driven.

Krishna himself says: *“I am the Self, dwelling in the heart of all beings, and the beginning, the middle, and the end of all that lives as well”*.

It has been seen across all regions of India that people welcome others by bowing their heads and having the palms of their hands together at their heart. It shows the belief system that it is the seat of heart. Love is regarded as a transformative force that can bridge gaps and dissolve divisions. The Gita emphasizes the practice of selfless love, where one’s actions are driven by a genuine concern for the well-being of others. This love extends beyond personal attachments and envisions a universal love that embraces all beings. Through acts of kindness, empathy and compassion, individuals can promote unity and interconnectedness.

Love is as a transformative force that can bridge gaps and dissolve divisions. The Gita emphasizes the practice of selfless love, where one’s actions are driven by a genuine concern for the well-being of others. This love extends beyond personal attachments and envisions a universal love that embraces all beings. Through acts of kindness, empathy and compassion, individuals can promote unity and interconnectedness.

Chapter 6, verse 30 “yo mām paśhyati sarvatra sarvaṁ cha mayi paśhyati tasyāhaṁ na praṇaśhyāmi sa cha me na praṇaśhyati”

Translation- “For those who see Me everywhere and see all things in Me”, “I am never lost, nor are they ever lost to Me”.

In this verse, Lord Krishna explains that those who have mastered their minds and achieved self-realization perceive all beings with an equal vision. They are able to maintain a sense of impartiality towards everyone, regardless of their circumstances or behavior. The verse underscores the importance of transcending dualities and seeing beyond superficial differences. It reflects the notion of treating all beings with compassion and understanding, without being swayed by external appearances or prejudices. Lord Krishna’s teachings in this verse emphasize the need to rise above personal biases and judgments, fostering a mindset of inclusivity and empathy. By practicing detachment and cultivating equanimity, individuals can develop a broadminded and compassionate outlook towards others.

This verse serves as a reminder of the transformative power of self-realization and introspection. It encourages individuals to transcend divisive distinctions and embrace a universal perspective that acknowledges the shared humanity of all beings. This verse emphasizes the universality of love. It suggests that true love transcends boundaries and is based on seeing the divine presence within all living beings.

Chapter 5, verse 25 “labhante brahma-nirvāṇam ṛiṣhayaḥ kṣhīṇa-kalmaṣhāḥ chhinna-dvaidhā yatātmānaḥ sarva-bhūta-hite ratāḥ”

Translation- “Those holy persons, whose sins have been purged, whose doubts are annihilated’, ‘whose minds are disciplined, and who are devoted to the welfare of all beings, attain God and are liberated from material existence”.

In this verse, Lord Krishna explains that true renunciation is not simply about abandoning external actions or responsibilities but involves renouncing the attachment to the fruits of

Understanding Love and Sense of Belongingness from the perspective of Holy Gita

one's actions. He emphasizes that the wise understand that true renunciation lies in offering the results of their actions to a higher power, rather than striving for personal gain or gratification. The verse underscores the idea that renunciation does not require individuals to withdraw from the world but rather to cultivate a detached mindset while engaging in their respective duties and responsibilities. It highlights the importance of performing actions selflessly and without any expectation of rewards or outcomes. Lord Krishna's teachings in this verse remind us that true renunciation is a state of mind and attitude rather than a physical act. It encourages individuals to cultivate an inner disposition of detachment, where they are able to perform their duties with dedication and sincerity while letting go of any desires or attachments to the results. This verse serves as a profound insight into the path of spirituality and self-realization. It reminds us of the transformative power of renunciation, which enables individuals to transcend the limitations of the ego and connect with the divine essence within. This verse portrays love as selfless action. Love in its truest form, is not driven by selfish desires but instead works for the benefit and well-being of all.

Chapter 6, verse 5 “uddhared ātmanātmānam nātmānam avasādayet ātmaiva hyātmano bandhur ātmaiva ripur ātmanaḥ”

Translation- “By harnessing the power of your mind, you can uplift yourself and avoid self-deprecation’. ‘It's important to understand that the mind has the ability to either be a supportive ally or a harmful adversary to one's self.”

In this verse, Lord Krishna acknowledges that controlling the mind is indeed a demanding task. The mind often wanders and flickers like the wind, making it challenging to focus during meditation. He compares the mind to a turbulent wind, which is difficult to keep steady.

Lord Krishna advises that with persistent practice and detachment, one can gradually control and discipline the mind. He urges Arjuna not to be discouraged by temporary setbacks but to continue making sincere efforts in training the mind. This verse reminds us that meditation requires patience and perseverance. It is natural for the mind to wander, especially in the initial stages. However, through consistent practice and detachment from sensory distractions, one can attain mastery over the mind's fluctuations. Lord Krishna's teachings in this verse emphasize the importance of practice, determination, and a sense of detachment from the external world. By recognizing the transitory nature of sensory pleasures and focusing on achieving inner peace, one can gradually bring the mind under control. This verse serves as a gentle reminder that the path of meditation is not without its challenges. It encourages aspirants to remain steadfast, keeping their goal in mind and persevering in their efforts despite any difficulties they encounter. By diligently practicing meditation and cultivating detachment, individuals can gradually still the wandering mind and experience the profound benefits of inner calmness, clarity, and spiritual serenity. This quote highlights self-love and self-compassion. The Gita emphasizes the importance of nurturing. Our own minds and developing a positive relationship with ourselves before we can extend love to others.

This verse emphasizes the universality of love. It suggests that true love transcends boundaries and is based on seeing the divine presence within all living beings. This verse portrays love as selfless action. Love in its truest form, is not driven by selfish desires but instead works for the benefit and well-being of all.

This quote highlights self-love and self-compassion. The Gita emphasizes the importance of nurturing. Our own minds and developing a positive relationship with ourselves before we can extend love to others.

Understanding Love and Sense of Belongingness from the perspective of Holy Gita

In addition, love comes as a result of the sense of belongingness. The Gita teaches that all beings are interconnected and interdependent, existing as part of a larger cosmic value. By cultivating a sense of belongingness, individuals can recognize their shared humanity and actively work towards creating inclusive communities, transcending divisive boundaries. Unconditional acceptance is another key principle emphasized by the Gita. It encourages individuals to embrace diversity and accept others as they are, recognizing the inherent worth and dignity of every person. By fostering an attitude of acceptance, one can break down barriers of prejudice, discrimination and intolerance, creating a space for mutual respect and understanding.

Chapter 9, verse 29 “samo ’haṁ sarva-bhūteṣhu na me dveṣhyo ’sti na priyaḥ ye bhajanti tu mām bhaktyā mayi te teṣhu chāpyaham”

Translation- “I am equally disposed to all living beings; I am neither inimical nor partial to anyone’. ‘But the devotees who worship Me with love reside in Me and I reside in them”.

Lord Krishna affirms that He accepts and uplifts all devotees, regardless of their past or present circumstances. He extends his divine love and protection to those who approach Him with sincerity and unwavering faith, underscoring the universality of His divine grace.

This verse embodies the profound message of inclusivity and love, transcending distinctions of class, caste, or any other societal norms. It conveys the notion that the divine is accessible to all, and one’s earnest devotion and genuine surrender are the key components that endear them to the divine. It serves as a reminder that the path to spiritual growth and liberation is not restricted by external factors, but rather hinges on the pure intentions and heartfelt devotion of the individual. Lord Krishna’s assurance in this verse instills hope and encouragement, emphasizing that no one is excluded from the opportunity to attain spiritual evolution and divine grace.

This verse highlights the idea that the divine does not discriminate or hold any biases toward anyone. The unconditional acceptance comes from recognizing the inherent equality in all beings.

Chapter 13, verse 27 “yāvat sañjāyate kiñchit sattvaṁ sthāvara-jaṅgamam kṣhetra-kṣhetrajña-sanyogāt tad viddhi bhatarṣhabha”

Translation- “O best of the Bharatas, whatever moving or unmoving being you see in existence’, ‘know it to be a combination of the field of activities and the knower of the field”.

In this verse, Lord Krishna reveals that the Supreme Soul pervades and sustains the entire creation, while also residing within the hearts of all living beings. This profound revelation points towards the interconnectedness and unity of all existence. The verse emphasizes that perceiving the presence of the Supreme Soul within oneself and in others is the true wisdom. This awareness leads to the dissolution of the ego-driven illusions of separateness and fosters a sense of deep compassion and love for all beings. Lord Krishna encourages seekers to cultivate the ability to see beyond superficial differences and recognize the indwelling divinity in every individual. By transcending the limitations of physical bodies and external identities, one can experience the underlying unity that binds all creation together. This verse serves as an invitation to delve into the depths of self-realization, where one realizes their own eternal nature and the omnipresence of the Supreme Soul. It reminds us that true knowledge lies in acknowledging and nurturing our connection with the divine.

Understanding Love and Sense of Belongingness from the perspective of Holy Gita

Here, the Gita teaches that perceiving the divine presence in every being allows one to achieve a higher state of consciousness. It emphasizes the need to accept all beings equally, irrespective of their social status or achievements.

Chapter 14, verse 22 “*śhrī-bhagavān uvācha prakāśham cha pravṛittim cha moham eva cha pāṇḍava na dveṣṭi sampravṛittāni na nivṛittāni kāṅkṣhati*’ ‘*udāsīna-vad āsīno guṇair yo na vichālyate guṇā vartanta ity evaṁ yo ’vatishṭhati neṅgate*”

Translation- “The Supreme Divine Personality stated: Hey Arjun, individuals who are beyond the influence of the three qualities of nature (sattva, rajas, and tamas) neither despise the state of clarity and knowledge (resulting from sattva), nor the state of action and passion (resulting from rajas), nor even the state of ignorance and confusion (resulting from tamas).

They stay unaffected by the presence or absence of these qualities. Such individuals remain impartial towards the modes of nature and are not disturbed by them. Understanding that it is only the qualities that are at play, they remain firmly established in their own true self, without any doubt or hesitation.”

In this verse, Lord Krishna describes the path of spiritual evolution by saying that when one sincerely endeavors to rise above the influence of the three modes of material nature – goodness, passion, and ignorance, they become free from the binding effects of these modes. By gradually detaching oneself from the material desires and attachments, and by cultivating spiritual knowledge and practices, one can attain the state of transcendence.

Lord Krishna highlights that the mode of goodness is conducive to spiritual progress. It brings clarity, humility, self-control, and a sense of higher purpose. By embracing goodness, individuals can purify their consciousness, overcome the ego-driven desires, and develop an inclination towards spiritual growth.

The verse reminds us that true liberation lies not in indulging or identifying with the modes of material nature, but rather in rising above them. By understanding the temporary nature of material existence and focusing on the eternal spiritual reality, one can attain liberation from the cycle of birth and death. It is important to note that this verse does not advocate for completely renouncing the world or suppressing natural inclinations. Instead, it emphasizes the need to align our actions and desires with spiritual principles, thereby transcending the limitations imposed by the material modes.

In this verse, the Gita describes the qualities of someone who has risen above the material qualities and attained a state of unconditional acceptance. Such an individual is compassionate, forgiving and devoid of ego-, harboring no aversion towards any living being.

A sense of belongingness is also highlighted as a foundational element of unity. The Gita teaches that all beings are interconnected and interdependent, existing as part of a larger cosmic value. By cultivating a sense of belongingness, individuals can recognize their shared humanity and actively work towards creating inclusive communities, transcending divisive boundaries.

Chapter 6, verse 31 “*sarva-bhūta-sthitam yo mām bhajatyekatvam āsthitaḥ sarvathā vartamāno ’pi sa yogī mayi vartate*”

Translation- “The yogi who is established in union with Me, and worships Me as the Supreme Soul residing in all beings, dwells only in Me, though engaged in all kinds of activities”.

Understanding Love and Sense of Belongingness from the perspective of Holy Gita

Lord Krishna begins the verse by stating that the resolute determination of a yogi is steadfast like a flame that burns without flickering. This means that a sincere practitioner of yoga should remain focused on their spiritual goals, despite the challenges and distractions that may arise. The verse further emphasizes that achieving success in yoga requires consistent effort and practice over an extended period. It is not something that can be accomplished overnight or through occasional half-hearted attempts. Therefore, Lord Krishna advises that one should perform yoga diligently, without any expectation of immediate results.

By embracing this approach to yoga, one can develop a sense of detachment from the outcomes of one's actions. This does not mean that one should not strive for excellence or engage wholeheartedly in activities. However, it implies that one should not be overly attached to the results and outcomes of one's efforts. Lord Krishna encourages us to stay focused on the purpose of yoga, which is to attain higher consciousness and self-realization. By remaining dedicated and persistent in our practice, we can gradually overcome the obstacles that hinder our progress.

Here the Gita reiterates the concept of perceiving the divine in everything and everyone. It emphasizes that by developing the vision, a person never feels disconnected from them. This understanding fosters a deep sense of belongingness and unity.

Chapter 10, verse 20 “aham ātmā guḍākeśha sarva-bhūtāśhaya-sthitaḥ aham ādiśh cha madhyaṁ cha bhūtānām anta eva cha”

Translation- “O Arjun, I am seated in the heart of all living entities. I am the beginning, middle, and end of all beings”.

By using these metaphors, Lord Krishna illustrates his omnipresence and omnipotence, highlighting his supremacy over various celestial forces and deities. This verse serves to deepen Arjuna's understanding of Lord Krishna's divine nature and reinforces the concept of his all-encompassing greatness.

Furthermore, by revealing these aspects of his divine form, Lord Krishna aims to instill a sense of reverence, awe, and devotion in Arjuna's heart. He wants Arjuna to recognize and acknowledge his transcendental nature, thereby deepening their bond and strengthening Arjuna's faith in him. Through this verse, Lord Krishna seeks to emphasize that he is not just a friend and charioteer to Arjuna, but also the ultimate source of all cosmic powers and energies. It serves to remind Arjuna of the unfathomable depth of Lord Krishna's divinity and the incomprehensible nature of his cosmic form.

This verse highlights the idea that the divine resides within every living being. It signifies that we all share a common essence, ultimately connecting us together. When we recognize this shared divine essence we naturally cultivate a sense of belongingness to all beings.

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, the teachings of the Holy Gita provide a deeper understanding of love and a sense of belonging. The teachings of holy Gita highlight the importance of promoting harmony, compassion and inclusivity in our lives. By adopting these qualities, we can create a peaceful and interconnected world where individuals from diverse backgrounds stay together with love.

Love is a transformative force that transcends boundaries and catalyzes connection. The Gita teaches us to practice love without conditions, extending kindness, and compassion to all

Understanding Love and Sense of Belongingness from the perspective of Holy Gita

beings. Through love, we bridge differences and foster empathy, reinforcing the bonds that unite humanity, a sense of belongingness is crucial for world unity. The Gita teaches us that we are all interconnected and share a common essence. When we recognize and honor this interconnectedness, everyone feels valued, heard, and part of something greater. Building a culture of belongingness ensures that no one feels excluded, promoting unity and collaboration. Incorporating these teachings into our lives empowers us to contribute to a world united by love, and a sense of belongingness. By living these principles, we create a ripple effect that inspires others to embody them as well. Together, we can forge a path towards global unity, where understanding, compassion, and harmony prevail.

REFERENCES

- Bhagavad Geeta, Gorakhpur press
- Bhatia, S. C., Madabushi, J., Kolli, V., Bhatia, S. K., & Madaan, V. (2013). The Bhagavad Gita and contemporary psychotherapies. *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*, 55(Suppl 2), S315-S321.
- Bhosale, S. (2015). Rational emotive behaviour therapy in perspective of Bhagwat Gita research. *International Journal of Current Research*, 7(11), 22612–22613.
- Ellis, A. (1954). *The American sexual tragedy*. New York: Twayne.
- Ellis, A. (1957). Rational psychotherapy and individual psychology. *Journal of Individual Psychology*, 13, 38–44.
- Phogat, P., Sharma, R., Grewal, S., & Malik, A. (2020). The overlapping principles of Bhagavat Gita and contemporary psychotherapies. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 8(3).
- Reddy, M. S. (2012, Jan - March). Psychotherapy-Insights from Bhagavad Gita. *Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine*, 34(1), 100 - 104.
- Sharma, N. (2014). The Bhagwat Gita as a complimentary tool to cognitive behavioral therapy. *International Journal of Applied Psychology*, 4(2), 45–49.
- Sternberg, R. J. (1998). *Love is a Story: A New Theory of Relationships*. Oxford University Press.

Acknowledgment

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Radhika, Dhawan, A. & Saijel (2024). Understanding Love and Sense of Belongingness from the perspective of Holy Gita. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 12(1), 329-336. DIP:18.01.033.20241201, DOI:10.25215/1201.033