

The Arjun Within - A Psychological Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Bhagavad Gita is a sacred Hindu scripture that forms a pivotal part of the Indian epic Mahabharata. Gita is a profound philosophical dialogue between Lord Krishna and Prince Arjuna, set on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. It addresses fundamental questions about life, duty, righteousness, and the nature of existence. Teachings of Gita guides individuals on how to maintain calmness in the face of adversity, make wise decisions, and find inner peace through self-awareness and self-realization. It emphasizes the importance of performing one's duties selflessly, without attachment to the results. The epic Mahabharata, serves as a source of profound wisdom, contributing not only to the cultural and philosophical fabric of India, it also has profound parallels with western healing methodologies like psychotherapy, offering timeless lessons that resonate with individuals seeking both spiritual and psychological well-being. The teachings of the great epics have prompt and pragmatic solutions to the great inner conflict of modern individuals. Fathoming out the enigmatic persona of Arjun (a prince, a warrior, the fourth son of Kunti in the epic Mahabharat) in the context of psychological interpretation provides illumination of insights regarding integration of reason, emotions, moral consideration and reflections about consequences of individual's actions in one's own life. His reputed succor to learn resilience and pro-create a life worthwhile.

Keywords: *Psychotherapy, Bhagavad Gita, Mahabharat, Arjun, Wise Mind, DBT, Carl Jung, Existential Psychology*

Arjun is one of the pivotal characters of Mahabharat and Geeta. He was fourth child of Kunti, a queen who possessed a unique boon that accorded her to invoke any deity and bear a child from them. Pandu, husband of Kunti, was cursed as a consequence he could not bear children himself. He respectfully regarded and accepted Kunit's boon to have children from various gods. The surety, respect and regard prevailed in their parenthood. Arjun's birth was a joyful episode though life of prince Arjun was a choppy voyage yet love of caregivers made the expedition smooth for shaping his convictions. His dramatis persona brings alive the essence of an intelligent seeker, a disciplined devotee and an ardent performer.

Arjun as an intelligent seeker

Imprinting is an adaptive process that corroborates how offspring take cognizance and bond with their caregivers, a process pre-eminent for survival and through development. It is believed to be ushered by innate predispositions and can have lasting effects on an

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individual's social and behavioral patterns described as fixed-action-patterns. This gives voice to the attachment style offspring establishes. Studies state that imprinting can't be forgotten, unlike learning, which can be reversed.

Imprinting, whatever is learnt introductory is remembered the best [Hess, Eckhard, (1972)]. In Arjun's bringing-up it can be observed that the loving environment during his early days expedited the foundation to form secure association learning that helps him to become an intelligent seeker. Secure attachment style provides foundation for emotional well-being and interpersonal skills that can enhance one's capacity to learn. It fosters a positive attitude toward learning, resilience in the face of challenges, and ability to form supportive relationships that aid in the learning process.

'Arjun is a seeker and so he pieces together all what he hears from Shree Krishna to puzzle out his problems' [Patnaik, D, (2015)]. Memorializing Arjun as a seeker of truth and knowledge ups the ante of wisdom. He assimilated virtuosity in archery, music, dance, or the like. The knowledge of Geeta was proffered by lord Krishna at request of Arjun withal, therefore seeking guidance. The same had been cited by Sanjay who voiced it over to Dhritarashtra. Yet neither could soak-up the erudition because Sanjay undertook his existence as a disadvantaged person to witness the deadly war between kinship and Dhritarashtra who was blinded by the trepidation of his children's life. Arjun who had an imprint of secure attachments is the solitary personage to decipher the message proffered and finds solutions to his queries.

Arjun in context of existential psychology and Carl Jung's individualization

Carl Gustav Jung was of an opinion that by understanding the unconscious individuals untie themselves from its ascendancy. Existential psychology is an approach to examine an individual's quest for subjective experiences, concerns, challenges arising from the human way of life. It anchors on studying how individuals make meaning, confront existential questions and grapple with the realities of existence.

While the character of Arjun in the epic Mahabharat predates Carl Jung's concept of individualization, one can draw parallels and cognate Arjun's journey and the quest for self-discovery and self-realization.

- 1. The journey of self-exploration-** Arjun's character embarks on a fervent inner journey throughout the epic Mahabharat, withstanding copious challenges and conundrum. Likewise, the quest for individualization involves self-exploration, introspection, and a deep examination of one's values, beliefs, and identity.
- 2. Integration of opposing forces-** Carl Jung emphasized the importance of integrating diametrical psychological forces within the individual, such as- conscious and unconscious; the persona and the shadow; and the anima and animus. This process of integration aligns with the pursuit of the true self. Closely Arjun can be observed having skirmishes amongst various polarities along with internal dissensions and his external environment.
- 3. Individualization-** The theory of archetype ways up true-self as central, sorted archetype that endeavors to bring a line with all other aspects into coalesce, designated as whole-self. As maintained by Jung, the true objective of human existence is to attain advance, enlighten psychological existence that he referred to as individualization. Arjun's character in parallel evolves through his experiences. His perspicacious observations assist him to learn valuable lessons about life, morality,

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and spirituality. His journey encompasses finding his authentic path and aligning his maneuver with his deepest values and sense of duty.

Action based on pleasure or pain principle

Every choice, decision, and action of a human is motivated by the fundamental desire to avoid suffering or attain happiness. Both are biologically connected and always exist together. Understanding of the might and maneuver associated with pain or pleasure empowers humans to weave enduring changes that are best for themselves and their loved ones. 'Arjun' is that state of our mind where response is based on 'Individual Will', a mind that is alert and active. The state of mind overpowered by 'Individual Will', becomes deranged when it confronts 'Divine will'. Primary reason for this derangement is one's awareness of their true potential yet concurrently unawareness or ignorance of one's limitations. Human mind is unable to free itself from the bonds of attachment, this is the second main argument it presents to itself for going astray from 'Divine Will'.

Before every action, mind keeps weighing the associated meaning of these actions in terms of – 'more pleasure' or 'less pain' – depending on one's level of neuroticism 'less pain' may have more weight than 'more pleasure' or vice versa. More often, in the short term 'less pain' becomes a preeminent motivator. Therefore, human selection is stronger for behaviors that increase suffering, and the emotional intensity associated with it in order to avoid them. Similar was the state of mind, clogged by 'pain' that caused Arjun to panic, as he saw his kinsmen before him on the battlefield, and not the unrighteous people. With such a state of mind, Arjun presented an argument to not fight for establishing righteousness, attempting to go astray from 'Divine Will'.

Arjun 's weapons as a symbol of masculine and feminine energies

Umpteen studies of multifarious views have considered bow and arrow in its metaphorical expression of masculinity and femininity. One of them is a study done by Harry Hoffner, a professor of Hittitology. Arjun was blessed with a divine weapon named 'Gandiv' a bow and different types of arrows and celestial missiles named 'Pasupatastra', 'Bhramhastra'. It is believed that Arjun was entrusted with 'Gandiv' by lord Agni, the god of fire and 'Varun' the lord of water and sky along with lord 'Krishna'. The convening of two opposites can be put forth as noteworthy. The allegory of polar opposites here could be pondered as masculine and feminine energy.

The bow, as a phallic symbol, is believed to represent masculine energy, while the string represents feminine energy. The combination of these energies in the 'Gandiv' bow reflects the psychological concept of integrating and balancing both masculine and feminine aspects within oneself. Carl Jung opined that human beings have both masculine and feminine attributes. The unconscious masculine attributes were termed as animus and feminine attributes were called anima. The masculine energy exhibits an action-oriented aspect of self that positions itself as 'doing'. While the feminine energy renders creativity, intuition, and feelings, footing itself as 'being'. The society by enlarge can be observed having an achievement-based mindset which is preoccupied with an action-based frame of mind. Consequently, there arises an imbalance in the masculine energy of the collective consciousness on the whole. The upbringing and modeling somehow out-turns in focusing more on 'doing' in lieu of 'being'. Career, achievement, success, type of work, cars, assets, property, grabs more attention than evolution, happiness, togetherness, intuition, introspection, richness of existence, essence of soul and so forth.

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Arjun, the possessor of 'Gandiv' represents that part of human psyche which countervails and equilibrizes both attributes within self.

ARJUN AS A WISE MIND

The concept of wise mind was introduced within the field of dialectical behavioral therapy (DBT), a therapeutic approach developed by Marsha M. Linehan. The concept of wise mind is a fundamental aspect of DBT and is used to help individuals to find a balanced and mindful way of approaching situations and emotions.

- 1. Intellectual clarity** - Arjun is kenneled for his intellectual acumen. Analyzing situations, considering various perspectives and making rational judgements are the abilities he has to his name. His wise mind enables him to descry beyond pressing circumstances and perceive a broader view.
- 2. Reflective Thinking** - Arjun engages in reflective thinking and introspection. He contemplates the consequences of his actions, the nature of life, and the ethical dimensions of his choices. His reflective approach demonstrates his horizon for wise and discerning thoughts.
- 3. Seeking Guidance** - Notwithstanding his own wisdom, Arjun humbly seeks guidance when beset with moral or existential conundrums. He consults Lord Krishna who imparts profound spiritual and philosophical teachings providing him with guidance and insights. Arjun's sunny dispositions to seek wisdom from higher sources evinces his understanding of the vastness of learning opportunities beyond the limitations of his own knowledge.
- 4. Integration of emotions and reasons** - Integration of emotions and reason is essential while availing a wise mind. Arjun thwarts his emotions to overpower his pace for rational thinking. He acknowledges his feelings but also engages in logical deliberations to arrive all well considered decisions.
- 5. Ethical and moral decision-making** - Arjun strives to act in accordance with righteous principles and upholds his duties as a warrior and noble person. His wise mind guides him to connect with inner self, beyond conscious, learned self, societal or genetic imprints to work for greater good.

Arjun as a learner with regards to omission bias and cognitive consonance

Human being may not possess the attributes of being superlative at weighing up both rational and emotional mind in the process of edifying Arjun, he goes through omission bias.

कीर्ति ता द्रौपदी वाचा अनुज्ञाता च पाण्डवैः ।
भवत्यविजिता केन हेतुनैषा मता तव ॥ ३३ ॥
मन्यसे वा सभामेतामानीतामेकवाससम् ।
अधर्मेणेति तत्रापि शृणु मे वाक्यमुत्तमम् ॥ ३४ ॥

During the game of gambling 'Draupadi' was a parlay by the eldest brother 'Yudhisthir'. Arjun who was a brilliant archer and superior warrior chose inaction towards protecting his wife. This can be taken as a parallel of omission bias. Be that as it may, cognitive consonance aids him in accommodating to ask for counseling from Lord 'Krishna'. Eventually, undertaking his omission bias in account, he tackles to get into action amending the wrongdoing of inaction to create a result important to find a way to provide justice to 'Draupadi'. This journey of inaction to action reflects 'wise mind'.

CONCLUSION

Arjun's embodiment of an intelligent seeker, a disciplined devotee and ardent performer serves as a model for individuals to cultivate wisdom, intellectual clarity, reflective thinking, ethical decision making and righteous actions. His persona encourages mankind to develop a balanced and discerning approach that lets the calmness instill within where all the states of mind unite to work for greater good.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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