

A Study of Ernest Hemingway's The Old Man and the Sea with Special Reference to Srimad Bhagvad-Gita

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Abstract: Ernest Hemingway and his work *The Old Man and the Sea* is well known name for readers of American literature. Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* has lots of attribution from all over the world for its unique story of an old Santiago. Who is the protagonist of the novel has perseverance, endurance, courage, self-believe and believe in action or karma in every situation. While he is making efforts to fulfil his duty and after his efforts going failure, when end of the novel he has only marlin's skeleton. And in the world famous scripture *Srimad Bhagvad-Gita* lord Krishna also reveals some facts about karma and true warrior and present study is also an attempt to discuss Santiago's story on the basis of lord Krishna's preaching's to Arjuna about karma and true warrior, which makes ordinary human being a warrior through going on the path of action.

IndexTerms - Srimad Bhagvad-Gita, Karma, Warrior, Duty, Marlin, Old man.

I. INTRODUCTION

Ernest Hemingway is undoubtedly a famous name of American literature. And his last work *The Old Man and the Sea* is a masterpiece, for this Hemingway won Pulitzer Prize in 1953 and most prestigious Noble Prize in 1954. *The Old Man and the Sea* is a story of Cuban old fisherman, named Santiago. He is a code hero of Hemingway, because he has some specific characteristics and his own code of conduct or action. These qualities makes him great warrior.

Hemingway portrays Santiago as a great warrior, who possesses all qualities which makes ordinary human being a warrior. From the very beginning of the novel, life of Santiago is full of struggle and challenges and he is only tried his best one day after another. He is never give up to adverse situation. When he failed to catch fish for last eighty-four days and being empty hands, he is being called 'Salao' (Hemingway, 2004: OMS: 3) by local people, which is worst form of unlucky. But still he has hope and self believe to try once more to fulfil his duty. As his action defines he believed in karma as said in *Srimad Bhagvad-Gita*, it is one of the most famous Holy Scripture of Indians/Hindu's in which lord Krishna describe about karma in chapter second and said:

Karmanyevaadhikaaraste maa phaleshu kadaachana |
Maa karmaphalaheturbhuu maatesangotsvakarmani || (*Srimad Bhagvad-Gita*: 54)

As lord Krishna defines in above verse that right of human is to work only not in its fruit. Never be an action is fruit oriented. And never give up and going without action or karma being human. And Santiago by profession is a fisherman and his work is to catch fish. Physically, he is old but mentally he is strong enough to face any misfortune and hurdle. He has positive attitude and self –confidence as Hemingway describe him:

The old man was thin and gaunt with deep wrinkles in the back of his neck. The brown blotches of the benevolent skin cancer the sun brings from its reflection on the tropic sea were on his cheeks. The blotches ran well down the sides of his face and his hands had the deep-creased scars from handling heavy fish on the cords. But none of these scars were fresh. They were as old as erosions in a fishless desert. Everything about him was old except his eyes and they were the same colour as the sea and were cheerful and undefeated. (OMS: 3-4)

When his companion and helper boy called Manolin forced by his parents to leave Santiago because now he is 'Salao' (OMS: 3) and his fruitful or lucky days are gone as well as he grown old. But in this situation, Santiago still has hope and self-confidence and decides to go far-away on the sea and he went and said:

Only I have no luck any more. But who knows? Maybe today. Every day is a new day. It is better to be lucky. But I would rather be exact. Then when luck comes you are ready. (OMS: 22)

When on the eighty-fifth day he is on the sea he got chance to hook very big fish named marlin with hooking marlin old man's struggle and battle start with fish but while caughting marlin his actions and thoughts about fish proved him as a true warrior and generous human being, who has sympathy and respect for others while they are their hunt and belongs to opposite party. Being a fisherman catching fish is his work (occupation), but as a human he has sympathy for marlin and for him marlin is his brother or friend not an enemy. As he said:

'The fish is my friend too,' he said aloud. 'I have never seen or heard of such a fish. But I must kill him. I am glad we do not have to try to kill the stars.'(OMS: 56-57)

In Srimad **Bhagvad-Gita** when Arjuna surrender himself to Lord Krishna to seeing his relatives in battlefield of Kurukshetra and forget he is human but he is warrior too. And now he is in battlefield, his work or duty is to fight and face the situation not give up and runaway. Then when Arjuna was in shelter of lord Krishna, lord has to describe his devote Arjuna following preaching about duty of true and great warrior:

Sva-dharmaapi caveksya na vikampitum arhasi I
Dharmyad dhi yuddhac chreyo 'nyat ksatriyasya na vidyate II (Srimadbhagvadgita: 48)

Lord Krishna said to Arjuna that for a warrior nothing is more important than the righteous war. And Santiago hero of Hemingway knows very well what is his duty or karma being a fisherman, while being in his land of action. For him sea is his land of action as battlefield for Arjuna and Santiago also feel attached to himself with fish, marlin as Arjuna feels for his relatives while in battlefield, but difference is that Santiago knows his duty and strength and has all qualities which makes him true warrior while lord Krishna in Gita has to realize Arjuna his strength and worth to present and prove himself as a true warrior.

After catching marlin Santiago still has to face challenges in the form of sharks. Because sharks are coming for marlin's flash and he wants to save his winning prize, marlin from shark. And he fought second battle with sharks with full courage but finally he failed to save his prize when he reached at the shore and has only marlin's skeleton. After long struggle he is still empty hands but one thing which is he has that is sense of satisfaction that he fought a battle with full heart and courage till the end. As he said:

'But man is not made for defeat.' He said. 'A man can be destroyed but not defeated.' (OMS: 80)

In Gita also lord Krishna says that fight (do karma or duty) without thinking about victory and defeat, gain and loss, pleasure and pain but always ready for the fight and for the duty for remains sinless. As lord Krishna describe:

Sukha-duhkhe same krtva labhalabhau jayajayau I
Tato yuddhaya yujyasva naivam papam avapsyasi II (Srimad **Bhagvad-Gita**: 50)

Lord Krishna's preaching's about karma and warrior in Srimad **Bhagvad-Gita** is universal as we see on the basis of above analysis and Ernest Hemingway's code hero Santiago has all qualities like strong will power, endurance ,courage and believe in action which makes him to deserve and become succeeded to provide him a tag of true warrior.

REFERENCES

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