

# The Relevance of Bhagwad Gita in the Corporate World

Pratyush Ranjan

Sanskriti Pujari

UGC Junior Research Fellow

UG Scholar

School of Political Science

School of English

Gangadhar Meher University, Sambalpur, Odisha, India

## Abstract

Bhagwad Gita, the philosophical treatise, being a treasure-trove of ideational as well as practical insights, can be followed in all ages and places of human existence. Its meta-principles can be applied to arrive at necessary principles relevant in most avenues of human life. This paper attempts to identify some of the ways in which the timeless and secular wisdom contained in the ancient text could be utilized to improve conditions of the corporate world, from the individual to the systemic and ecological levels. It identifies the excesses of egoism, anthropocentrism, materialism, consumerism, and so on, that have plagued the corporate world, having made the quest for a better life and universal progress difficult, which the *Gita* opposes tooth-and-nail. It extols the virtues of adopting necessary spiritualism for the individual as well as corporate growth. It attempts to extract rich lessons from the *Gita* regarding the proper way of planning and of execution, contained in the ideas of *Gyaan Yoga*, *Karma Yoga*, *Bhakti Yoga*, and so on. It promotes the significance of self-realization, introspection, effective communication, the special role of exemplars and leaders, and the need to speak the truth to power. It claims how by following the practical ideals contained in the philosophical text, especially of the performance of *Nishkam Karma* or of selfless action, one can possibly achieve individual happiness, boost institutional productivity, achieve systemic stability, and so on.

## Keywords

Bhagwad Gita, Gyaan Yoga, Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Nishkam Karma, Egoism, Materialism, Machiavellianism, Spiritualism, Dharma

## The Bhagwad Gita – An Introduction

*The Bhagwad Gita*, a narrative set in the middle of the battlefield in Kurukshetra where the Pandavas and the Kauravas await to fight the mightiest battle ever fought in the history of Indian mythology- the Mahabharata, a war fought amongst the successors of the *Kuru* clan, the *Pandavas* (the more righteous lot) against the *Kauravas*, family against family, for the re-establishment of *Dharma* (ethical righteousness) in accordance with *Riti* (cosmic order). It mainly focuses on the dialectical conversation between the great warrior Arjuna (the Pandavan prince) and his charioteer Krishna who also happens to be Arjuna's friend, philosopher, and guide. On the eve of the war, Arjuna's courage falters and he finds himself incapable of raising his bow (*Gandiva*) in order to fight his kith and kin. It is in this situation of vulnerability that he turns towards Krishna.

Krishna provides Arjuna with his divine knowledge and insights on what the significance of *Dharma* is and how the latter's actions (which are not merely some personal and professional duties) would have universal consequences. Krishna offers a vehement critique of egoism, purposeless materialism, and of philosophical ignorance, and, emphasizes the timeless wisdom of the *yoga* philosophy. The *yoga* philosophy, negatively, refers to the conscious abstinence from indulgence in the excesses of impulsivity and egoism, and, positively, proposes one to undertake moderated righteous action in the performance of one's *Dharma*, in the direction of *Riti*. Krishna preaches mainly three major kinds of *Yogas* – *Gyan Yoga* (acquiring righteous knowledge and planning), *Karma Yoga* (performance of duties and discharging of responsibilities), and *Bhakti Yoga* (aiding one with necessary faith and devotion in maintaining direction and integrity), all of which are mutually interdependent on one another for taking *yoga* to its logical conclusion. Krishna contends that in a world that struggles to find a balance between material gains and spiritual transcendence, between desire and contentment, between sensual pleasure and sustainable happiness, performance of *Nishkam Karma* - or the selfless performance of righteous action, aided by the Sun of *Gyan Yoga*, and the beacon of *Bhakti Yoga*, as the most practicable ideal.

This paper would not comment on the historical accuracy of the nitty-gritty of the war or on the actual conversation between the two chief protagonists but would attempt to extract the secular and symbolic message containing insights of possibly universal and eternal significance. The *Gita* is widely acclaimed to be a philosophical treatise containing the advanced synthesis of various philosophies of the day, which will be pertinent, for generations, unless there is a thorough overhauling in the basic features of the human and the social conditions. The text contains

various generalizable principles and broad prescriptions that are open to several interpretations, from parochially religious, to universally cosmopolitan, also nihilistically indifferent, and transcendental. The paper would adhere to the interpretation that it considers as the most relevant to the contemporary corporate scenario.

Symbolically, anyone (whether an individual or an organization or even the global community), struggling in any situation, and in need of philosophical direction, may be compared to Arjuna. The higher, more rational, more stable, and more knowledgeable personality within oneself, or the institutions concerned with planning and course-correction in an organization, which must come to rescue, in times of moral conflict, may be compared to Krishna. The lower, more egoistic, more impulsive, materialistically ambitious, philosophically and spiritually ignorant, inconsistent, and anarchic personalities may be associated with the Kauravas (with the blind Dhritarashtra as the epitome). The indifferent personality or the independent (and powerless) observers may be correlated with Sanjaya, who disinterestedly narrates the story of Mahabharata to Dhritarashtra.

As contended, the *Bhagwad Gita* is a gospel that embraces and provides insights on, all aspects of life, professes eternal guidance for the way of living, the importance of spirituality, and the overall development of an individual. Its teachings and ideals can be used in all walks of life, in situations that send a person into a state of utter despair and delusion. When in a dilemma, one can always turn to the Gita for answers. It teaches us to make the most of what we have and what we do by continuous strife and non-attachment to the rewards. The vast practical, as well as theoretical knowledge of Gita, is relevant for all times and all kinds of people regardless of the various distinctions and barriers. The eternity and universality of the wisdom contained in the text make it a useful reference for conducting a pragmatic analysis of the importance of ethics and spirituality in the corporate world.

### The Corporate Scenario – The Dhritarashtra Trap

Dhritarashtra was the blind father of the Kauravas (the less-virtuous and losing side in the Mahabharata). Although purportedly, he also received the divine revelations from the enlightened Krishna in the real-time, through the impeccable journalistic service of Sanjaya (his aide), he was not moved by even an inch. This could be attributed to the immensity of the armor he constantly denied to strip off- that of spiritual ignorance, of blinding ego, and of the obsession of material possessions (including of the empire and his dishonorable sons). His blindness is often symbolically associated with the undesirable qualities so expressed. Kindly note that any offense towards blind individuals is purely unintended. The trap of impulsivity, materialism, egoism, intolerance, Machiavellianism, and so on, from which individuals and corporations find it very challenging to obtain rescue, is metaphorically articulated here as the Dhritarashtra Trap.

The corporate world of the day faces dilemmas of the nature that Arjuna did, and is predominantly populated by individuals like the Kauravas were- purposelessly ambitious, egoistic, sycophantic, lacking in real knowledge, consumerist, endlessly materialistic, temperamental, and so on. Although there exist various levels of organizational hierarchy, on which one can base one's analysis, every such analysis would point to the conclusion that the whole corporate system is afflicted with similar challenges that may require a comprehensive overhauling, starting from the ideational and normative dimensions. The level of planning is distressed by the Dhritarashtra Trap, as most of the planning, in the neo-liberal age, is mainly motivated towards maximization of profit chiefly for the privileged owners and controllers of the companies, without much concern for ecological principles (of integrating planning and management with that of the larger society and natural ecology) or for the individual needs of the lowest-level staffs. A similar effect is also faced at subsequent stages of execution, organization, coordination, and so on. Corporations devoid of a holistic vision, in consonance with broader economic, social, and ecological processes, contribute in the unsustainability and destabilization of the same, possibly culminating in economic, social, and ecological crises.

Materialism, *per se*, is the cause of zero-sum games, where competition and conflicts are the predominant methods of interaction (Smart, 2016). In such a situation, actors resort to the endless pursuits of securing relative gains, that is- attempting to maximize the net profit of oneself (by gaining more than or securing greater loss of other actors). Even when entities cooperate, it is mostly to secure maximum relative profits vis. a vis. bigger entities or other groups of entities. This is because the quantum of the utilizable or exploitable matter is limited, whereas the population and demands of humans keep burgeoning. Therefore, one benefits at the cost of many others. The inextinguishable resources of idealism and spiritualism can bring some necessary solace to this world of purposeless materialism. These lesser-tapped sources can help all people achieve that kind of happiness and contentment that is sustainable, of higher quality, and only multiplies when attained by one and subsequently equitably shared, whereas, the pleasure based on egoistic materialism is more transitional, limited, and of a zero-sum nature. Arguably, humans are born idealists who undertake various activities like acquiring education, following religions, creating nations, reading books, watching a theatrical play, playing video games, performing meditation, and so on- activities that are not strictly materialistic but are capable of providing a similar or higher degree of pleasure. The contribution of idealism and spiritualism could be to take this inextinguishable and more fulfilling alternative of synthesizing spiritualism and materialism, to its logical conclusion, by helping individuals recognize the limited necessity of material possession, and the unlimited potential of spiritual realization. Just like conventional and limited sources of energy are today being replaced by renewable ones, one needs a similar revolution to replace or complement egoistic and materialistic appetites with a pearl of more transcendental and fulfilling wisdom to realize the Greek ideal of a 'good life' or *Eudemonia*. The *Gita* even suggests the performance of

material duties as a way to spiritual transcendence, something that can be well integrated into the corporate scenario. The *Gita* recognizes materialism as one of the legitimate but transitional stages of intellectual and spiritual evolution. The epoch of aimless materialism that had started probably during the Industrial Revolution, aided by the idealism of the Enlightenment, must be stopped and thoroughly revised to suit the special needs of the day.

The highly competitive, ego-centric, and materialistic corporate lives that people lead today lack the vital aspect of spirituality. At an individual level, there is a constant struggle (and sometimes failure) to make ends meet as a result of internal barriers. The barriers include the inner contradictions (a veil of *avidhya* i.e. ignorance of real or higher knowledge), a feeling of alienation (the inability to realize one's free-will and to connect with one's work and its outcomes), lack of motivation, and direction (failure to realize the higher purpose), a struggle for setting priorities (personal, professional, or societal, which are nothing but illusions or, as *Gita* puts it, *Maya*), and so on.

Moreover, in the pursuit of fulfilling personal ambitions, people often forget their higher purpose- a sense of responsibility towards the society, the ecology, and the world as a whole, which comes after conscious and consistent self-realization. *The Gita* does not claim that having an ambition is an unacceptable thing, but it promotes aligning those ambitions with higher social and ecological principles- aligning *sva-dharma* with *sadharan-dharma*. Ambitions that go beyond the basic material necessities of life should adhere to the *dharmic* law. The unprincipled ego must be abandoned. Therefore, at an organizational level, there is a need to bridge the gap between right and good. This can be achieved by the practice of *Gyaan-*, *Karma-* and *Bhakti-Yoga*. Legislation, execution, and adjudication must be performed by the concerned, for the attainment of, and is regulated by *dharmic* ideals.

### Need of Spiritualism at Workplace

As far as the corporate world is concerned, it is chiefly work-oriented. This resonates with the *Karma Yoga* prescribed in *Gita*. Spiritual advancement, through the performance of *Karma Yoga*, does not require the renouncement of worldly responsibilities (personal, professional, and social) but a shift in one's motivation, being driven by a sense of selflessness while performing ethical action and not by an expectation of materialistic gain (Sargeant, 2009).

Adhering to Aristotle's idea of the human as a "rational animal", or liberal idea of *homo economicus* (economic human), companies have mostly treated their employees as capital resources. The human body and brain have always taken an upper hand over the human spirit and mind (which in this context refers to consciousness). The mind or consciousness is the seat of intelligence and spirituality that are essential for facilitating the transcendence of humans from their baser impulsive selves to more rational and individually fulfilling ones.

Spiritual fulfillment has been one of the most underrated ideals of the corporate industry, which is often implicitly manifested in the ideas of job satisfaction, sense of fulfillment in the workplace, ethics at the workplace, the realization of a "good life" or a holistically successful career. Spirituality Quotient or Spiritual Intelligence is the ability of a person to attain self-awareness and consciousness and thereby realize her individual *karma* and the efforts required for the accomplishment of the same for personal well-being as well as the welfare of the society at large. In recent times, although the corporate sector has come to realize the importance of emotional quotient (EQ) along with intelligence quotient (IQ), the spiritual quotient (SQ) has mostly been neglected. There is a need for a synthesis of all these forms of intelligence in order to shape a human resource into an insightful, self-aware, ethical, efficient, motivated, responsible, and significant part of an organization.

The twelve definitive qualities of a spiritually intelligent person, according to Danah Zohar and Ian Marshall, are- self-awareness (need to understand and realize real knowledge, based on one's position in the cosmic hierarchy), spontaneity, being led by vision and values (principles-based actions), holism (the realization that all beings are a part of the higher consciousness and cannot exist independently), compassion, embracing of diversity, standing out from (and sometimes against) the crowd (Arjuna fighting against his own family in order to establish *Dharma*, which is the cosmic stability maintained through ethical laws, in the midst of *adharma*), seeking answers to fundamental questions (the inquisitiveness of Arjuna to acquire more and more knowledge), ability to understand and appreciate different perspectives (the placement of the chariot in the centre of the battlefield, in order to get an overall perspective of the situation at hand), resilience, humility, and realization of the purpose of one's life (vocation; through the practice of *Gyaan Yoga*) (Zohar & Marshall, 2004, pp. 75-81). Therefore we can say that these principles in some way or the other echo the teachings of the Bhagwad *Gita*.

### Planning, Introspection, and Self-Realization- Eyes at the Top and Feet at the Bottom- Insights from *Gyan Yoga*

It is held that the industrial sectors are part of national economies that are part of the larger international society, which is again part of the larger natural ecology. Therefore, any real planning at any of the lower levels must be accountable to the opportunities and constraints present at a higher level. Consequently, even if ordinary individuals are treated as the units of economic and policy analysis, making the level of analysis as high as possible is indispensable in this age of a globalized village, where individuals, corporations, and societies can no longer claim to be atomized and completely autonomous, and the ripple effects of actions of one can reverberate across spatial and temporal dimensions, as are the effects of unsustainability and other harms associated with the Industrial Revolution felt across space and time. Thus, some form of top-down

planning is necessary if efficient and sustainable success is to be achieved.

The *Gyan Yoga* of the *Gita* is about proper collection of information, realization of effective knowledge, and performance of righteous planning accordingly. It holds that one needs to first understand one's position in the natural and social order, and then realize the rights, liberties, duties, roles, and opportunities, befitting such a position. It is about framing the right theories, principles, means, methods, aims, and objectives befitting the position of an individual or the organization in the cosmic hierarchy. It helps the organization identify its *dharma*, in accordance with the cosmic *riti*, and the talents, skills, resources, and opportunities it encompasses. One must never either underperform or transgress the ambit of *dharma*. If such a golden mean is maintained, and corporations perform to their optimum levels, it would lead to the comprehensive and sustainable development and prosperity of all.

Even while the *Gita* calls for adopting the universal or the global as the level of analysis (calling for top-down planning); it leaves ample space for accommodating bottom-up planning, for it accepts especially the sentient individuals as the proper units of policy analysis. The *Gyan Yoga* involves the performance of introspection at the individual level to ensure alignment of one's *svadharma* (individual morality) with the *sadharan-dharma* (general ethics).

When, Krishna takes Arjuna's chariot to the midst of the war, equidistant from the two warring sides, it symbolically means- rescuing oneself from the limiting confines of one's egoistically-biased perspective and taking a bird's eye account of any difficult situation whilst trying to synthesize the truth coming from every side (including that of the enemy). It is necessary not to get carried away impulsively at the heat of the moment, and in undertaking a multi-perspective analysis, with multiple stakeholders, and temporal dimensions in mind. The *Gyaan Yoga* helps one identify one's karma (action), its nature, and the methods required for the accomplishment of the same, in accordance with *Dharma* (cosmic order). This can be related to the modern day SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis. SWOT analysis is an assessment of the Strengths and Weaknesses (internal factors) of an individual or an organization, the Opportunities that it has and Threats (external factors) that it may encounter (Davenport, Bensoussan, & Fleisher, 2013). Once the inherent, as well as acquired talents, are realized, the limitations are overcome, available resources are appropriately utilized, and a certain philosophical, as well as scientific rationality, is achieved, one would realize one's self-worth, and the contribution she can (and needs to) make to an organization and the society. Self-realization, of one's spiritual as well as material oneness with all, which forms the rational basis of individual relation with one another in society, and with the Absolute Self, is necessary for achieving ideational and spiritual transcendence, and realizing real happiness, peace, satisfaction, and so on, of one and all.

### **Execution – the Ideal of *Nishkam Karma* – Individual Satisfaction with Productive Efficiency – Insights form *Karma-* and *Bhakti Yogas***

If the state or global human society is treated as *individual writ large* – or as an individual whole, composed of organic parts, the industrial sector could be seen as its limbs- executing the commands of the brain, performing the physical functions, and catering to the material demands of the body. Such functions are associated with the conventional understanding of one's *karma*. Therefore, the industrial sector can be said to be one of the major performers of the *karma* of the state, and hence, must take insights from the ideal of *karma yoga* mentioned in the *Gita*.

Moreover, individuals who staff the corporations, spend the largest chunk of the golden period of their lives performing the duties assigned by their superiors, considering it their *karma*, whether willingly or compulsively. Therefore, the happiness and fulfillment in their lives, and whether of a purely material kind or with spiritual dimensions, depends in major ways on their work and interactions at their workplace. The corporate world, if led by and for the preservation of- virtuous principles associated with justice, could act as the vehicle of individual prosperity, securing redemption and emancipation from societal as well as one's instinctively distressed self. If left directionless, or if led by egoistic principles and Machiavellian individuals, it could result in alienation and exploitation of masses, as seen in the worst days of slavery, feudalism, and of capitalism.

The ideal of *Nishkam Karma*, as part of *Karma Yoga*, proposes the doctrine of performance of one's duties (*karma*) with a sense of absolute detachment from the fruits of labor (*nishkam*), aided with absolute devotion (*bhakti*) and sense of sacrifice (*yajnya*) of one's egoistic and materialistically possessive instincts (the ideal of *Bhakti Yoga*). It is rightfully said that such an approach to duty is a rewarding end-in-itself while leading to the material as well as the spiritual growth of the individual-in-community while upholding *dharma* and securing prosperity of all.

Individuals, mostly, get attached only to the material ends of their professions, feeling happy only on the day of receiving salaries or at most-on weekends. Even the nature of most of their work is alienating- as the German philosophers- G. W. F. Hegel and Karl Marx have described. Hegel describes alienation in an idealistic sense- something that prevents individuals from realizing their innate spiritual personalities, making a similar argument as made in the *Gita*.

Marx identifies alienation of labor in an economic and materialistic sense, in which laborers are made to overwork, under humiliating conditions, for the profit of other individuals. Both ideas of alienation are rampant in the present day and lead to loss of freedom and dignity of individuals. *Nishkam karma*, in the performance of *dharma*, aims to restore the dignity of labor, boost productivity, end alienation, and maximize freedom (at least in a Hegelian sense). T. H. Green was one of the thinkers who had attempted to synthesize idealism and materialism, holding the former as the ultimate end, and the latter as an unavoidable intermediate stage. The *Gita* does a similar synthesis by promoting equitable and sustainable material growth, with a spirit of psychological transcendence, while professing detachment from the outcomes.

Individuals mostly seek to make their labor meaningful- to themselves, for their loved ones, and to the larger entities, they consider important- their religions, nations, etc. Alienated labor is devoid of meaning and provides nothing but meager hand-to-mouth survival. *Nishkam karma* aims to restore that meaning to work by making it in tune with *dharma*, promising the performer a share in global sustenance and making work appear as a sacrifice in the worship of the Ultimate. In the *Gita*, the God is identified with everything- including all matter, and energy in the real as well as the virtual world- pointing towards cosmopolitanism, ecologism, universalism, and so on. Therefore, any vocation that promotes these principles, not just catering to the purely selfish wants of the employer, can be interpreted as spiritual and divine.

Isn't it wonderful to realize that fact that one has had a contribution to making the world a better place? When a person identifies her vocation and strives for individual excellence, indulging less in expectation of promotion or salary hikes, and more in the improvement of her work, one attains satisfaction and, subsequently, bliss. Work satisfaction is, in fact, the ultimate form of bliss. The lack of expectations reduces stress and channelizes our focus to the goal of performing our action and duty in the best manner possible. Work satisfaction leads to individual salvation, it helps an individual redeem herself from the metaphorical cycles of life and death, in the form of cycles of pleasure and pain, and transcend into a more sublime form of work-environment. The performer of *Nishkam Karma* is neither too thrilled nor disinterested regarding the possible outcomes of a vocation. She performs the action because she thinks it to be the right as well as the good thing to do. She would perform the actions in the best way possible by putting her heart and mind in its performance, without being distracted by the result. Moreover, under the constraints of circumstantial uncertainties, in case the outcome turns out to be unfavorable, the principled detachment would prevent the building up of regret, frustration, and similarly harmful emotions. Such an employee would not expect inordinate breaks, vacations, bonuses, and cooling-off periods after an arduous task is accomplished and would begin another assignment as soon as possible, as she had accepted the work as worship and not as a punitive burden.

However, some caveats must be taken note of while making someone dedicate and devote as wholeheartedly as is asked for in *Nishkam Karma*, to make sure she is not manipulated and exploited by a perverted superior in the name of *dharma*. The company must adhere to *dharmic* (including social and ecological) principles while deciding its means and ends, and not merely cater to the selfish designs of some individuals. It should adopt the ideals of equitable freedom, justice, rights, and corresponding duties, transparency, accountability, cosmopolitanism, ecologism, and so on. Employees must be given a proper role in their management and given equitable leisure for their private lives, which is necessary for spiritual self-realization. There must be substantial administrative, regulative, and adjudicatory machinery to ensure the exercise of *dharmic* principles by all.

### Functional differentiation

The *Gita* recognizes the Vedic grouping of humans into the *varna*-based- (profession-based, and not *jati*-based, i.e. hereditary) categorizations of *Brahmins*, *Kshatriyas*, *Vaishyas*, and *Shudras* based on their innate talents, acquired skills, social and professional opportunities (and limitations thereof), physical and mental capabilities, functional specialization, and most importantly- one's intellectual and spiritual temperament (that determines the level of evolution in the material-spiritual continuum) .

The groupings could be broadly compared with various functional and complementary roles in an organization. Kindly note that this paper dissociates itself from the pejorative historical implications such a scheme of grouping (when based on *jati*) had on Indian society, leading to caste-based discrimination and exploitation. It categorizes humans into any or many (if one performs multiple functional roles) of these groupings simply based on one's situational functional specialization and need, rather than on heredity or privilege. It treats the following categories as ideal types only, with any practical correlation being purely coincidental.

1. *Brahmins*: The virtuous, upright, insightful, and knowledgeable people who practice self-control and patience. They guide and direct the ones in power. They are ones responsible for planning, control, top-level administration, adjudication, and so on- to ensure that every level of the organization is run according to the larger plan and broader principles. People at a higher level in the corporation, with legislative and directorial functions, would fall under this category.
2. *Kshatriyas*: The brave, steady, and resourceful leaders who are efficient and forthright in performing their duty, which is- execution of the laws, plans, and ambitions of the society or of the concerned organization. These people are the ideal administrators, executive staff, quasi-adjudicators, and managers, who have innate leadership qualities that help them in leading their units.
3. *Vaishyas*: These are the traders, capitalists, money lenders, practicing economists, agriculturists, basically the producers and business class people who ensure the smooth running of the economy, in consonance with the fourth class. They ensure sustenance, subsistence,

and stability of any system. They need to do so with integrity and in accordance with the precepts of *Dharma*, so as to avoid corruption, crony-capitalism, uneven distribution (and concentration) of wealth and so on (Houck & Williams, 1996). In an organization, they could be compared with the resource-agents, logisticians, accountants, sales-people, marketing staff, and so on.

4. *Shudras*: One whose duty is to provide service (*seva*). This pertains to the service sector and the working class of the society, including the laborers, farmers, tenants, artisans, customer service providers, and so on, as the foundation of any economy (Dowling & Scarlett, 2006). This category has seen the maximum impact of the technological revolution and automation. The difficult and distressing works earlier assigned to members of mostly this group can now be replaced by artificial intelligence and mechanical robots, to restore the dignity of sentient subjects.

In the corporate world, we see a similar structure. Work is divided among people, based on their capabilities and capacities. A correct form of division of labor, keeping in view the talents, skills, passions, etc of the employees would promote job satisfaction, boost production and efficiency, and build workplaces of excellence.

### Importance of the Truth, the Right (over the Good), and its Communication

Often, in the industrial world, there exists a large gap between the right and the good. In the context of this paper, the right can be defined as that moral standpoint which is valid or preferable with respect to a common principle, is based on higher (or preferably the highest) truth, so that all similar entities coming under that principle can be compared and judged similarly. Whereas, goodness is that moral position with respect to an entity (and not a higher principle) where one is judged based on its favorability to that entity. For instance, one action is right or wrong based on the precepts of saying the Constitution, but, one is judged good or bad (with respect to another), only based on whether the former's actions improve the egoistic position of the latter. Hence, righteousness, as is used in this paper, is based on more universal principles, whereas goodness, here, is more egoistic. The *Gita* advocates performing the right over the good. Therefore, it had advocated the Mahabharata war, even if the consequences were bad for many individual stakeholders. It says that ideally, the right should be the same as the good, or as the French philosopher, Jean Jacques Rousseau would say- the real (lesser selfish) wills of individuals would compatibly converge to make the general will of the society. However, it regrets the discontinuity between righteousness and goodness, diagnosing the cause in the tendency of individuals to fall prey to the Dhritarashtra Trap.

In the industrial space, populated mostly by people and ethics, as the Kauravas were and held respectively, as is argued earlier, speaking the truth (especially to power) and performing the right (over the good-especially to power) is metaphorically suicidal. The truth is often neglected in order to satisfy the egos of corporate superiors or to attain a beneficial outcome. The naked truth, amounting to critical analyses, especially of seniors, is rarely appreciated, and pretention is glorified which leads to a lack of development of a culture of transparency, truthfulness, mutual criticism, and tolerance.

Bridging the gap between right and good to the point both become one requires an overdose of communication and acceptance of transcendental truth. The *Bhagwad Gita* is a poetical dialogue which focuses on the dialectical conversation aimed at uncovering the relevant truth, and to unify the right and the good for Arjuna. It also documents the conversation between Dhritarashtra and his advisor Sanjaya, the latter who gives an honest narration to the king, sometimes to the latter's annoyance, with a level of honesty that forms the foundation of their trust. Sanjaya provides his evaluative insights when asked for by Dhritarashtra, which shows the freedom of speech and thoughtful expression given to an employee at a lower rank. It is to be noted that well-constructed arguments coming from various perspectives find their way into the dialogues in the *Gita*, and not just the monologues of Krishna. This proves the significance the author attaches to dialectics, dissent, tolerance, deliberations, the belief in the plurality of relative truths, and the trust on the freedom of speech and expression.

Corporate communication is vital for effective teamwork, facilitating transparency, building public relations, and most importantly for the smooth functioning of the corporation as a whole. The need for honest, clear, and concise transfer of information via verbal or non-verbal methods from a person at one rank to another is of great importance. Frank and open communication with accountability and reliability lead to the creation of an environment built upon trust where integrity thrives and ethical conduct is appreciated (Frankel, 2006). Everyone, no matter what rank she holds, should be given the opportunity to be heard, and a say in the managerial affairs that concerns her. A healthy work environment, that values truth and nurtures strong moral values, would ensure a feeling of belongingness, eliminate biases, and reduce the feeling of alienation, ultimately incentivizing the workers to perform their respective *karmas* in the best way possible.

### The three kinds of people

According to the *Gita*, people can be categorized into three personalities based on their *Gunas* (inherent nature): *Sattvic*, *Rajasic*, and *Tamasic*.

- A *Sattvic* person is one who is self-inspired and does her duty without any attachment or averseness to either the duty or its results, one who is not prompted by inner emotional upsurges and thereby transcends the worldly definition of sensual pleasures and experiences ultimate bliss. They are the wise thinkers and mature experts of their fields.

- A *Rajasic* person is one, who with utmost personal passion, selfishness, and desire for social and professional recognition and appreciation, and for material gains, performs actions with great energy and brilliance. They are naturally charismatic leaders and drivers of industries.
- A *Tamasic* person is one, who, driven by her evil instincts, performs actions regardless of the deontological precepts or consequences and thereby causes harm to both herself as well as others. Though they aim at usurping power, fame, and material wants, they fail to transcend their limiting and enslaving impulses, causing destabilization, unsustainability, and breakdown of norms of ethical conduct.

As far as the corporate sector is concerned, people with *sattvic* attributes are the most desirable but are the fewest in number. It is filled with either passionate *rajasic* individuals or cut-throat *tamasic* competitors. They are power-, money- and praise-hungry people who are blinded by the *maya* of worldly pleasures. Although they work hard, they do so for purely individual profit, blatantly disregarding social and ecological norms and limitations. Even companies behave in such manners and hire employees with similar attributes, forgoing long-term stability and sustainability for short-term productivity gains, feeling structurally compelled to behave similarly, in a semi-anarchical and competitive scenario. Such companies make systemic instability and collapse more imminent.

A majority of *Sattvic* personalities in workplaces, on the other hand, would ensure a boost in the quality of the work done, in the most sustainable way. A person with *Sattvic Guna* would prove to be a diligent employee, an efficient leader, and a sensible manager. Unaffected by unnecessary emotions and detached from the fruits of action (getting neither excited nor frustrated by minor variations and challenges), the person would give her best effort to the work at hand. The combined effort of this category of people would lead to the overall development of the company as a whole and the community at large.

### Role of an Exemplar, a Leader

The Mahabharata had so many heroic characters like Bhishma, Karna, Duryodhana and a host of other great warriors but why did Krishna decide to provide Arjuna with his divine guidance? Arjuna, the great archer, had the qualities expected of a leader, and was *sattvik* and *rajasic* in desired proportions. He personified the balanced combination of the three different kinds of authorities as enunciated by Max Weber- as legal-rational, traditional, and charismatic. His single-mindedness helped him perform his actions with perfection. Moreover, he was on the side of *Dharma*. He had the rational ability and capacity to transcend his lower consciousness and understand the sublime knowledge of the *Gita*. For all these reasons and more, Arjuna was chosen for the role of an exemplar. Arjuna can be analogized to the modern day corporate leaders who with their vision, efficiency, and wisdom would guide their followers to work towards the attainment of higher social and ecological goals and eventually lead their respective companies to glorious heights.

Nevertheless, the *Gita* provides intellectual guidance for every employee at every level of an organization, promoting one to lead even without a title, as a famous book with a similar name goes (Sharma, 2010). The *Gita* is genuinely interested in promoting individual happiness and freedom to realize one's spiritual potential while caring for systemic order and justice, which is again indispensable for individual fulfillment. Therefore, it considers everyone to be equitably significant in worth and in capacity to lead while expecting a special role from people in positions of authority, who command extraordinary influence and legitimacy others, and, are rational and wise enough to transcend their egoistic wants while serving their communities.

### Conclusion

The industrial sector is essential for the material fulfillment of humanity. However, it can also act as a medium of spiritual emancipation for people, while upholding and strengthening systemic order, if run according to appropriate principles of *dharma* and *Gyan Yoga*, including those of universal and equitable justice, holism, sustainability, procedural equality, substantial individual freedom, and so on. It may offer individuals and organizations opportunities to realize the golden mean of *Karma Yoga*- that involves- achieving spiritual fulfillment through proactive action, without the complete renunciation of worldly affairs and of material occupations, aided by the devotion and sacrifice of the *Bhakti Yoga*. The sector could act as the engine for the all-round development and sustainable progress of all if transcended beyond merely growth-oriented models of production. For that, corporate lives should be treated as means to social and ecological ends in a holistic sense, which would automatically secure "good lives" or *Eudaimonia* for all human individuals as well as other especially sentient entities. Such a state of affairs would be the one which would secure the greatest happiness for the greatest number- the goal of the utilitarian tradition.

As argued, various principles mentioned in the *Gita* can contribute to the substantive extent to advance individual freedom (at least in a spiritual sense), and eradicate alienation. As asserted, they can result in superior planning, decision-making, organization, management, execution, introspection, evaluation, adjudication, and so on, leading to greater job satisfaction among employers, enhanced outcomes for the employers, and sustainable and harmonious stability and prosperity at the systemic level. The *Gita* can help individuals actualize the spiritual and spiritualize the actual, utilizing the best of the human potential. Its doctrines of *nishkam karma* and of rational theism offer individuals the opportunity to attach spiritual meaning to work and perform it with a sense of dedication and sacrifice, facilitating the attainment of the greatest end-*moksha* (liberation from cycles of pain and pleasure, of cravings and disappointment, and so on).

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century industrial order witnesses a divorce of economics from ethics, materialism from spiritualism, individualism from socialism and ecologism, the personal from the professional, all of which are leading it towards impending crisis. Corporate ethics are motivated towards boosting the growth of individual companies, at any cost to the individuals on the ground or the social and natural exchequers. This is the outcome of falling prey to the Dhritarashtra trap, with individuals and organizations being dominated by *rajasik* and *tamasik gunas*. The present age is chronically afflicted with egoism and anthropocentrism, something the *Gita* passionately critiques. The *Gita* promotes moderation and equanimity and inspires individuals (especially leaders) to activate and empower their *sattvik* personalities. It synthesizes idealism and materialism to promote equitable and sustainable progress of all. It advocates individuals to transcend their consciousness from material to sensual, from sensual to mental, from mental to the intellectual, and finally- from intellectual to spiritual. It teaches the timeless wisdom of *yoga* (in a philosophical sense) that is essential for human fulfillment and can be applied extensively in the industrial sector. It upholds the significance of truth, which is necessary for corporate communication (at other stages as well). It emphasizes the relevance of endorsing the principled right over the egoistic good.

Therefore, the *Bhagwad Gita* is a philosophical masterpiece that provides extensive insights in terms of principles and ways to facilitate the proper functioning of the industrial world, which presently finds itself in a state of disarray and in critical need of rational guidance.





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