

ANCIENT CONCEPT OF DIET IN HEALTH

Dr. K . Narayanan*

Abstract -

The Gita is based on a discourse between Lord Krishna and Arjuna at the inception of the Kurukshetra war and elucidates many psychotherapeutic principles. The concept of the Behavioural Therapy Model of the Bhagavad Gita for the psychologically healthy person is investigated in the relevance of the cross-cultural set up to the current psychological medicine. The rational purpose of enlightenment of the Bhagavad Gita to enhance the efficacy of behavioral therapeutic interventions for one's and to add value. The basic canon of the Indian culture on the perception and its relevance of behavioral therapy in multi-ethnic culture have been analysed.

Keywords - Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna, Arjuna, Kurukshetra, Diet, Psychotherapeutic, Behavioural Therapy, Psychology, Health, Yoga Sutras, Patanjali, Upanishad.

Introduction -

The Srimad Bhagavad Gita is considered to be the prominent sacred book among the Prasthanatrayi¹ of Hindu philosophy. Our habits, are important to have better health, peace and ultimately lead to happiness all around in our lives. These are described in the scripture, Bhagavad Gita, which make us to be happy and healthy and to elevate our lives. The teaching from our Shastras including Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, holy Bhagwad Gita, and

¹Yadannam bhakshayennityam jayate tadrushee praja.

the various Upanishads expresses the great old saying "You are what you eat"² The other major conception the diet is related to health and behaviour. The one, whose diet and movements are balanced, whose actions are proper, whose hours of sleeping and waking up are regular, and who follows the path of meditation, is the destroyer of pain or unhappiness." The message is relevant even today, validated by modern scientific research and analysis of data.

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One can understand about the habits for better life and also can understand the habits; those can lead towards the path of destruction from the scripture of Bhagavad Gita. Explored these aspects from "Bhagavad Gita", and summarised herein for the benefit of all, describing what should be followed and what should not be. In brief, the habits described are: Rules & Regulations, Food & Sleeping, Properties, Work & Actions, Language of Speech, Yoga & Meditation, Self-Control, Equality, Purpose & Goal.

Life is the continual union of body, sense, mind, spirit and the Health as a whole physical, social, mental, sensory, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. Health and disease depend on the state of equilibrium between the internal and external environment forming a spectrum in between with various aspects and the levels of degrees of factors. The Bhagavad Gita provides precious and immense lessons in resolution and resumption of conflict that precipitate inaction from a state of acute anxiety and depression.

The concepts of holistic health, contemporary health behaviour and psychotherapies insights in the Bhagavad Gita that focuses on conflict and diagnosis of the patient, underlying psychological principles, the personality

²Mano- bhudhi - ahankara - chittani.

of diseased patients and concept of master and disciple (Guru-Shishya) elucidated in the Holy Gita.

The value of spirituality in healing is a time-honoured concept. There has been a recent surge in interest in the eastern philosophies for mental health care. In most cultures for centuries, different formats of directive or non directive talk therapies for treatment of mental health problems have been utilized. A variety of brief and culturally relevant models of psychotherapy have been in use since time immemorial. One of the most renowned discourses in Hindu philosophy and psychotherapy comes from the Holy Gita.

The timeless teachings of the Bhagavad Gita are deeply embedded in the Sanantana dharma psyche and continue to serve as a spiritual guide to the vast majority of dharma sadhakas viz. Hindus around the globe. This scripture consists of 18 chapters and 701 verses (shlokas) authored by Veda Vyasa and dates back to 2500 to 5000 years BC. The Gita represents chapters 25-42 of the Mahabharata, which has 100,000 shlokas.

The Gita³ is considered to be an essence of the Upanishads (texts that form the core of Sanatana Dharma philosophy). The progress of medicine depends exclusively on imagination, observation of the sick, meditation and experimentation in the science of laboratory. The Gita elucidates many behavioral therapeutic principles of sickness which is based on a conversation between Lord Krishna and Arjuna at the initiation of the battle field, Kurukshetra.

Many aspects are described 5000 years back in "The Gita", and practicing of those sutras provide the mankind very happiness and peace in life. Lord Krishna explained to Arjuna, when Arjuna was not happy in the battle field as he was to fight with his own people. The happiness or unhappiness is more related to mental stability and desires of individuals and the result of the events and worries in life at different contexts. Main factors for unhappiness, are because of the habits and practices, which we do ignore to follow in life. Most important is the balance in our life that affects and disturbs us a lot.

³Sarvopanishado gavo dogdha gopala nandanah

Parthovatsasudheerbhoktadugdhamgitamritam mahat...

(Stanza in appreciation of Bhagavadgita)

- **FOOD & RELAXATION -**

The Upanishads mean by 'food' that which is experienced by consciousness, either directly by itself or indirectly through certain organs. An object that is presented to a conscious subject is the food of that conscious subject.

The Maitrayani Upanishad says that the conscious person exists in the midst of matter. He is the enjoyer because he enjoys the food of matter (Prakriti). Even this individual soul is food for him; its producer is matter. Hence, what is to be enjoyed has three attributes (Gunas). Matter is that which is to be enjoyed. Pleasure, pain, delusion, everything is food. There is no knowledge of the essence (i.e., quality) of the source (matter), when it is not manifest. The manifest is food, and the unmanifest also is food. Food has qualities, but the enjoyer of the food has no qualities. The fact that he is able to enjoy shows that he is consciousness in nature (VI. 10).

In Maitraya Upanishad Ch. VI. verse 12 states the Food is only a manifestation of the Atman. One should adore food as the Atman. Taittiriya Upanishad glorifies that "I am food; I am the eater of food; I, who am food eat the eater of food (III. 10) and It is eaten and it eats all things (II. 2). The Prasna Upanishad describes the creation of Food and Life (Rayi and Prana) as two aspects of the One Creator Prajapati.

The Chhandogya Upanishad describes the process of the assimilation of food and drink. Food which is eaten, gets divided into three parts. That which is its coarsest part becomes faeces. That which is medium, the flesh; that which is finest the mind. Water, which is drunk, gets divided into three parts. That which is its coarsest part becomes urine; that which is medium, the blood; that which is finest, the breath. Fire which is eaten, gets divided into three parts. That which is its coarsest part becomes bone; that which is medium the marrow; that which is finest, the voice.

The mind consists of food; the breath consists of water, the voice consists of heat. The mind is influenced by the food which is eaten. A person thinks through the mental nature which he consists of, and this nature is fed by food. Hence, the food that is eaten should always be Sattvic, for, Verily, this person consists of the essence of food (Taitt. Up. II. 1).

There is lot described in Holy Gita about the kind of food to be taken and its impact on health and character of the person. It is well described about

the food and sleeping habits to maintain the health and to improve our behavioral and character aspects. About the food and sleeping habits, very well described in below verses of the Gita⁴.

To successful focus on any requirement or tasks, with full concentration, there is comfort relaxation or sufficient amount of intake and sleep are required and that provides energy in our efforts. There is no possibility of becoming Yogi, who eats lot or who eats too little and who sleeps too much or who does not sleep enough. Balanced eating, balanced recreation, balanced working, balanced sleeping and waking, along with practice of yoga leads to a misery-free life.

The verses mentioned below explained that, the healthy foods are those, which are juicy, mild and wholesome, which are beneficial. Eating such foods prolongs life span, purifies one, increases vitality, immunises from diseases, increases happiness levels and improves appetite. Foods those are extreme in bitterness, sourness, saltiness, hotness, dryness and fieriness called as passion foods. Consuming such foods causes pain, misery and unhealthiness. Foods, those are stale, foul smelling, tasteless, putrid, remnants of others, unfit to be offered. Therefore, the quality of food, is important as it matters on our health⁵.

● BEHAVIOUR AND CHARECTOR -

In true meaning, for a person, the asset is his own character and not just having the wealth or possessions. It is behavior and the signatures of a person, recognized by others. People are usually of different in nature but only few gets the name and fame and that is only possible by way of their behaviour and character. The qualities of a person, needed, can be described on many fronts but few are considered herein for discussion. Both the positive factors and the

⁴yukthahara viharasya yukthacheshtasya karmasu .
yukthaswapnavabodhasya yogo bhavathi dukhahaa.

Bhagavadgita 6/ 16

⁵katvamlalavanathyushnatheekshlarookshavidahinah.
aaharaa raajasasyeshta dukkhashokamayapradah.
yaathayaama gatharasam puthi paryushitha cha yath.
uchishthamapi chamedhyam bhojanam thamasapriyam.

(Bhagavadgita - 6/ 17 , 17 /8 , 17 / 9 , 17 /10)

negative factors are well defined in the Daivasura Sambadvibhaga Yoga chapter of Bhagavad Gita⁶.

- Theja: kshama dhrithih shoucham adroho nathimanitha bhavanthi sampadam diveem abhijathasya bharatha
- dambho darpofbhimanashcha krodhah parushyamevacha ajnanam chabhijathasya partha sampadamasureem
- anekachithavibhranthat: mohajalasangavrutthah prasakthah kamabhogeshu pathanthi narakeshuchou

The Holy Gita expresses that these Sublimity, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, no enemy to anyone, and absence of self esteem are the marks of the person, who born with the divine endowments. Pride, arrogance, self respect, anger, harshness, and ignorance are the marks of the person, who born with demoniac properties. Clouded by unlimited anxieties and strongly influenced by super complex network of illusions, such people become addicted to selfish desires and drop into hellish existence.

Devadvijaguruprajna Pujanam Shochamarjavam

Brahmacharyamahimsa Cha Shareeram Tapa Uchayate.

Lord Krishna reveals that the penance of the body which are qualities to be brought in practice for betterment with peace and happiness are Worship of Gods, brahmanas, masters, elders and having cleanliness, purity, simplicity, celibacy, non violence. These factors of a person decide their quality of actions and speech and attitude on which the personality of that person can be judged. In Bhagavad Gita, Srikrishna described about the senses of the body and their characteristics. The habit of controlling them is necessary, and that is to be practiced for greater happiness. In Bhagavad Gita, it is told that, it is difficult but possible, to control and conquer on our senses by practice and detachment. All because of the attractions all around and because of wavering mind. We need to accomplish the work with the help of senses. which are under control and is possible only through practice and with stable mind.

It is very important to know and follow the guidelines as described in the ancient scriptures, shastras like Bhagavad Gita the food and sleeping habits as explained, to follow good character, to focus on work with quality actions, to practice good speech, to practice yoga and meditation with self

⁶ Bhagavadgita - 16/ 3 , 16 /4 , 16 / 16 , 17 / 14

controls, maintaining equality among all and with purpose and goal of actions to have better health, peace and happiness in life.

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