

D. L. Murti Rao Oration :—

GITA AND MENTAL SCIENCES¹

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India is an ancient and a great cultural, spiritual and an anthropological laboratory. She has been the nursery of saints and sages, scientists and founders of world's major religions and promulgators of profound philosophy. Nevertheless, to be satisfied with the glory of the past is to turn into a fossil; but to interpret the old from a new point of view is to revitalise the past and bring in a current of fresh air into the monotonous present. I have chosen to speak on "Gita and the Mental Sciences" this day as my humble offering and tribute to the memory of my late teacher, Dr. D. L. N. Murti Rao. To Dr. Murti Rao formal religion and academic spirituality meant little. However, he was a great *yaganik* in search of truth in the true spirit of Gita. The wards in the hospital, the lecture halls, and various academic meetings with the students were the *Yagnyasalas* for him and he practised the "*Vidyadhan*"—propagation and transmission of knowledge, generously and freely. He used to call himself, at times a Cromwell although this was only his exterior. Cromwellian indeed he was in inculcating discipline but within this exterior was a man who was considerate, kind, understanding affable and easy of access to all. Combining in himself the passion of a scientist and compassion of a saint, he wore his learning lightly. As though to prove the saying that those whom the Gods love die young, Murti Rao died too prematurely to deny himself the vision of the blossoming forth of the two institutions that he fondly nurtured, namely, the All-India Institute of Mental

Health and the Indian Psychiatric Society. That amongst his students are the Directors of the Institutes, Superintendents of Mental Hospitals, Professors in the Medical Colleges and the Universities, who have contributed to the advancement of research, teaching and organising services in psychiatry in the country is a great tribute to the art and science of his teaching, as well as to his character.

GITA : INTRODUCTION

Rabindranath Tagore once said, "I love India not because I have cultivated an idolatry for geography, not because I have been born in its soil but it has saved through the ravages of time the words of its illumined conscious ones". Vyasa as a Colossus and Gita as his mighty creation stand out pre-eminently in India's sculptural history. Together with Upanishads and Brahmasutra, Gita forms the "*prasthanas trayi*" (scriptural trinity).

Warren Hastings, the first Governor-General of British India in his preface to the first English translation of Gita by Charles Wilkins (1785) two hundred years ago prophetically remarked: "The writers of Indian philosophies will survive when the British Dominion in India shall long have ceased to exist and when the sources which it yielded of wealth and power are lost to remembrance". Called 'The song celestial' by Sir Edwin Arnold, this Vyasa's 'quintessence of scripture' has interested and influenced men and women down the centuries. To name a few: Emerson and Walt Whitman, Carlyle and Thoreau, Max

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Muller and Aldous Huxley, Tilak and Gandhi, Vivekananda and Aurobindo, Tagore and Radhakrishnan and several others high and low. The great Acharyas—Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhva, Nimbarka, Vallabha saw in Gita an echo of their own philosophical thoughts, namely, Advaita, Vishishtadvaita, Dvaita, Dviadvaita, Suddhadvaita and incorporated the Gita concepts into their philosophical frame work. In this respect Gita is like a Rorschach inkblot. To Aldous Huxley the Gita “is one of the clearest and most comprehensive summaries of the perennial philosophy ever to have been made. Hence, its enduring value, not only for the Indians but for all mankind”. Among our Psychiatric fraternity, the names of Govindaswamy, Vidyasagar, Satyanand and Surya stand out as the ones considerably influenced by Gita.

Theistic in nature, psychological in import, simple in its teaching, universal in its message, practical though difficult in application, spiritual in its content and temperament and philosophical in its infra and suprastructural levels, Gita upholds the thesis on the ethics of desireless and incessant action. Gita’s theism and the call for action are expressed in the opening verses of one of the earliest of Upanishads, *Isavasyopanishad* :

“*Isavasyam idamsarvam Yajkinchajagatyam jagat
Tyene tyaktena bunjitha ma gridhaha kasya-
svidhanam*”
*Kurvanneveha karmani jijivisat satam samah
Evam twai : na anyathatoshti na karma lipyata
nare*

“By Abandonment thou shalt enjoy”.
“Performing verily work in this world one should desire to live a full hundred years. There is no other way.”

That the perfect state of mind recommended in Gita is difficult to achieve and has been brought out in the verse :

*manusyanam sahasresu kascid yatati siddhaye
yatatah api siddhanam kascin mam veti tattvatah*
“Among thousands of men scarcely

one strives for perfection, and of those who strive and succeed, scarcely one knows Me in truth.”

The path of realisation of the Absolute has been described in Upanishads as that of walking on the razor’s edge.

Taking these verses of *Isa* as the main strands, Gita weaves them into an elaborate and a beautiful web of a masterly work. Borrowings are also seen from Kathopanishad, and the philosophical systems of Kapila’s Sankhya and Yoga.

The eighteen chapters with their seven hundred and odd verses form an inset in the *Bhishma parva* of *Mahabharata*. Its composition has been speculated by some to be in the fourteenth century and by others around fifth century before the Christian era. The consensus appears to be that Gita’s date is interpolated between the end of the Upanishadic period and the elaboration of *Saddharshanas*—(the six systems of Indian philosophy—Sankhya and Yoga, Nyaya and Vaiseshika, Mimamsa and Vedanta) i.e., around the 3rd and 4th century B.C.

Whether Gita is a historical work or merely an impressive allegory has been labouring the minds of many a serious student. Sri Aurobindo advocates that the work should be considered as a real human eventful drama, Gandhiji, on the other hand discarding its historicity upholds “that under the guise of physical warfare, it described the duel that perpetually went on in the hearts of mankind, and the physical warfare was brought in merely to make the description of the internal duel more alluring”. Sankaracharya speculates that Lord Krishna must have given a few words of advice and encouragement to Arjuna on the eve of the battle, but later Vyasa elaborated them into what has come down to us as “Gita”. However, what should matter most is not the mythology but the message and the spirit of Gita rather than its historicity. Like many great philosophical works, Gita is in the form of a dialogue

between the faltering and faint-hearted and despondent warrior Arjuna and his charioteer Krishna, calm, collected and serene. At its fundamental level Gita highlights the Vedantic concepts of the Nature and Destiny of man ; the real nature of man is divine, his destiny lies in not only knowing and realising this divinity but the identity of his self and the universal Self, which implies a state of *moksha* or liberation from the bondage from the material world. Gita indicates the ways to realise this *sumum bonum*.

Gita is an ancient document on the affairs of the minds of men, their temperaments, modes and behaviour, frailties and strengths, their agonies and ecstasies, conflicts and resolutions and enunciates the supreme art of counselling to anabolise what William James called a "divided self" and to restructure the 'Soul's Schism' in the words of Arnold Toynbee into a synthetic whole. Gita as a work on basic human dynamic psychology is *par excellence* and a masterpiece of psychotherapy. It is a recipe for a better and a higher life. It delineates the psychobiography of human nature. In essence it unfolds the religion of the mind. Though a book of antiquity, its contents remain fresh and evergreen in import as are the ruins of Athens and its message is no less relevant today as it was during the bygone days of Mahabharata. Its relevance is all the more in today's world when the new born is treated as an unwanted excess baggage, the dotting and the aged looked down as untouchables and "useless mouths to be fed", sexual experimentation has come to usurp a loving human relationship, medicated meditation is deluding people into a state of illusory Nirvana and when "we are" in the oft quoted phrase of Margaret Mead "immigrants to the new world" and in our post industrial society, when the game is between man and man, when we are witnesses to the acts of man's inhumanity against man, man needs time to sand part from the

escalator of life and pause—for an internal dialogue with himself to explore the inner space to recover his unique humanness. Gita comes as an admirable aid in this context.

GITA AND SCIENCE

Sayings of scriptures, beliefs of religions and resonings of science cease to be at cross at their deepest depths. It is an ill-conceived notion of the misinformed to narrow them down as antonyms and mutually exclusive. Each one gets the glimpse of Truth from different views. "Ekam sat. Vipra bahudha vadanti" "Truth is one. The wise call it by different names" (Rig Veda). Sigmund Freud though an atheist recognised the need for and the usefulness of religion in the resolution of the conflicts in his patients and attributed the modern man's widespread mental anguish to his increasing inability to believe in God. Freud expressed that religion could assuage guilt feelings, especially of aggressive type and helps one to come to terms with the problem of inevitable dissolution—death. Walter Alvarez, Carl Jung, the doctor sage of Lamberene Albert Schwitzer—all men of Science felt the need for religion and faith in the spirit. Albert Einstein once said "My religion consists of a humble admiration of the illimitable superior spirit who reveals himself in the slight details we are able to perceive with our frail and feeble minds..." and "God is subtle but He is not malicious". Ambrose Pare, the Surgeon of Renaissance, whose figure stands at the threshold of modern surgery used to say in humility that he merely dressed the wounds but God healed them ("Je la pensai, Dieu le guarist") In Sir William Osler "the waters of Science and the oil of Faith" mingled freely as they did in his life long mentor Sir Thomas Browne. "To keep his mind sweet", Osler said, "the modern scientist should be saturated with the Bible and Plato, with Shakespeare and Milton".

MIND AND ITS FUNCTIONS

Perhaps for the first time in the history of Indian Philosophy, different rivulets and streams of thought converged into a confluence in Gita—Vedic ritualism, Upanishadic introspection, Sankhyan speculation and yogic meditation.

"Yogah karmesu kausalam" (Perfection in action is Yoga)

"Samathvam yogam uchyathi" (evenness of mind is Yoga)

To these Gita adds and accords a supreme place to that master of sentiments, namely, devotion—Bhakti.

This triple approach, namely, action, knowledge, and feeling, merging into one, which is a triumph of Gita over the earlier philosophical attempts, is the forerunner of the modern concept of tripartite mental functions, namely, cognition (*jnana*), connotation (*karma*) and affect ("*ichha*" or emotionally tinged desires or *bakthi*). This was the classification of major mental faculties offered to modern psychology by the German Philosopher Immanuel Kant. Homer had earlier drawn attention to these aspects of personality as "*noos*", "*thymos*" and "*psyche*". A harmonious blending and a concerted action of this trinity of functions is a requisite for the healthy mind. Any breach between them or within them can lead to a pathological split in the mind. Arjuna's mind clearly indicated such a dissociation :

"asocyan anvasocas tvam prajnavadams ca bhasase gatasun agatasums ca na'nusocanti panditah"

You grieve for those who should not be grieved for ; yet you spell words of wisdom. The wise grieve neither for the living nor for the dead.

Hysteria and schizophrenia in the modern parlance represent the split between and within the mental faculties.

Gita brings out beautifully the process of deterioration of personality—a dementing phenomenon in a few verses. This is the ladder of doom :

krodhad bhavati sammohah

*sammohat smrtivibhramah
smrti bhramsad buddhinaso
buddhinasat pranasyati*

From anger proceeds delusion ; from delusion, confused memory ; from confused memory the ruin of reason ; due to the ruin of reason he perishes.

These lines appear as though taken out from any modern text book of neuro-psychiatry.

Interestingly, Sankaracharya describes the converse, namely, the construction of personality in his "*Viveka Chudamani*".

MENTAL FIELD

The inaugural interrogative verse of Gita which incidentally is the only one from Dhritarashtra :

*dharmaksetre kuruksetre
samaveta yuyutsavah
mamakah pandavas cai'va
kim akurvata sanjaya*

Gathered together at Kurukshetra, the field of religious activities, what, O Sanjaya, did my war-inclined sons and those of Pandu do ?

is a fine and an elegant simile that epitomizes the natural state of the affairs of the human mind and the disturbing forces within it. The whole of Gita is in reply to this question. The mind of man can be likened to a veritable battle field : "*Manahkshetra*". There is an endless war of forces within the mind between the good and evil, divine and demon, high and low, *sreyas* and *preyas*, man and beast, between light and darkness, virtue and vice as represented in the Mahabharata war by the cousins—Pandavas and Kauravas. It symbolises what Shakespeare's Brutus calls a state of "insurrection" in mind. The battle between the lower and the higher is the theme that Gita elaborates. It is for these types of battle, minor as well as major, that psychotherapy is offered. This constant tussle within the mind was called "*psychomachia*" by the ancient Greeks.

Sigmund Freud described the mind as comprising triple terrains of the conscious, subconscious and unconscious. His discovery of the "unconscious" (hidden part) has been hailed as a milestone in the history of medical sciences and as important in its significance as that of the discovery of the circulation of blood by the English Physician, William Harvey.

The 20th century view on the nature of man cannot afford to ignore the role of the "unconscious", notwithstanding the non-Freudians. It is that part of the mind which engages the animalistic and instinctive qualities that press for entry into conscious and acts as a springboard for motivation of behaviour. This topographical model of mind by Freud represents the battlefield with clash of forces within them.

"The discovery that memories, thoughts and feelings exist outside the primary consciousness is the most important step forward that has occurred in psychology since I have been a student of that Science" says William James. "Within it are held those things that lie in the fringe of the stream of consciousness chiefly at its lower and the non-communicable level". We all carry the burden of the past—the burdens of the anatomical past, behavioural past and the cultural past.

The neuro-anatomists tell us that in our human brain the rudiments of animal brain persist. Carl Jung talks about the racial unconscious indicating thereby that we carry over the precipitate of memories of our entire past within our mental realm.

The instinctual urges and suppressed desires rise upwards towards the conscious to be opposed by the downward forces that are influenced by cultural, social, environmental and personal leanings. The unconscious is a necessary component since everything cannot be held in the conscious. Contrary to the Vedantic and Gita view, Freud saw human nature as basically evil and the ultimate destiny lay in sublimating it. Rousseau held that man by nature is

good and it is the society that corrupts him. The unconscious need not always be the storehouse of evils and the unacceptables. It houses the sparks of goodness as well as divinity. Too often we are unaware of them. Did not the poet Thomas Gray rhyme in his "Elegy" :

"Full many a gem of purest ray serene
Vast unfathomed depths of oceans bear ;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen
And waste its sweetness in the desert air"

Gita persuades us to recover the gems and flowers which are within us. The sublimating mechanism in Freud's system remains unconscious.

MIND AND ITS NATURE

It is difficult to say whether the term "mind" used in Gita is applicable in the way it is used today. Probably "mind and bhuddhi" complex of Gita to some extent approximate the modern usage of the word. Gita treats the mind as a "thing" or an entity in the same way as Charaka treats it in his Samhitha. To the mind has been assigned the role of the sense organ in Gita and it belongs to the lower order along with the senses, bhuddhi and the body which have their origin in the Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Ether.

"Indriyanam manas ca asmi"

(Of the senses I am the mind)

In the hierarchy of the derivatives from the lower Prakriti, mind occupies a place higher than the senses but lower than the intellect or bhuddhi. The personality in Gita as in the Buddhist writings is compared to a chariot drawn by horses. While the horses represent the sense organs, and bhuddhi the charioteer, the reins denote the mind. This concept has its source in "*Kathopanishad*". That mind is constantly blasted by the sensual desires is highlighted in Gita. Freud was not far from this view of Gita. The turbulent senses carry away the mind violently.

"Indriyani pramathini haranti prasabham manah".

“Like a boat tossed about on the high seas by a gale, mind can be uncontrollable”.

The difficulty of the control of the mind is brought out in the line.

“*Chanchalam hi manah krishna*

pramathi balavad dhridam”

“The mind is restless, turbulent, strong and stubborn. It is as difficult to control as wind”.

Gita advocates the attainment of a state of evenness of mind—(“*samathvam*”), its steadiness (“*sthirahpragna*”) and peace (“*shanti*”) comparable to the “steadiness of a lamp that flickereth not in a windless place”. (*Yatnadipo nivathas tho naingte*) An unruffled state of mind is compared to a tortoise with its limbs drawn in. (“*kurmo angani samuarate*”) A steady state of mind, a sustenance of its peace have been the quest of the philosophies of all the lands. Greeks called this “ataraxy”. Gita terms it “*Shanti*” and “*Samatvam*”. Osler revived it in his “*Aequanimitas*”

MIND, ITS OWN FRIEND AND FOE

Troubles for the mind are mainly from within and hence their combating also should come within. Sankara remarked that there are no devils other than those in the minds of man. Did not Milton Rhyme :

The mind is in its own place

It can make a heaven of hell or hell of heaven

The United Nations preamble states that the wars start in the minds of man and the seeds of peace should be sown in the same place. These concepts are elegantly brought out in Gita :

uddhared atmana tmanam na

tmanam avasadayet

atmaiva hy atmano bandhur

atmaiva ripur atmanah

Let a man raise himself by his own self ; let him not debase himself. For he is himself his friend, himself his foe.

bandhur atma tmanas tasya

yena tmaiva tmana jitah

anatmanas tu satruev

varjeta tmai ve satruvat

To him who has conquered his (base) self by the (divine), self, his own self is a friend, but to him who has not subdued the self, his own self acts as the foe.

One's own mind has a preventive and a curative function. Healthy habits of attitude, thoughts disposition and feelings can offer equilibrium. It brings out the fact of enormous resources that are available within for healing. This is the aspect that one is not aware of. Some of us have called this “Anjeneya complex” which is brought out in psychotherapy. These however do not exclude environmental influences. Sublimating mental mechanism, which Freud spoke come for within. All types of defence mechanisms originate from mind. Many of these are detrimental and pathogenic while some are sublimating.

THEORY OF GUNAS

At the time when Gita was composed, the Sankhian philosophy was known but not yet fully developed. This school of philosophy was promulgated by the sage Kapila of whom the lord speaks in Gita as a perfect sage : “*Siddhanam Kapilo Munih*”. The Sankhians considered the human personality as a field (*kshetra*) within which the three forces interact and called it a web of gunas—“*Gunajala*”. These triple forces are—*Sattvik*, *Rajasik* and *Tamasik*. The gunas, literally meaning the “threads” or “strands” comprise the basic constituent stuff of everything : men, matter and things. They represent the mode or quality or character of each item of things. The human personalities in various forms result from permutations and combinations of these gunas in infinite ways. *Sattvik* represents the subtle, *Rajasik* represents the dynamic, *Tamasik* represents inertia. The Sankhian writers compared the gunas to an oil lamp where the flame represents the *Sattvik*, oil the *Rajasik* and the wick the *Tamasik*—one can divine that they correspond to the Psychology, Physiology and Anatomy. Gita

describes different types of activity, food, behaviour, temperament and knowledge as belonging to the three types of gunas. The mental types are thus classified into Sattvik, Rajasik and Tamasik. In keeping with the Sankhian theory mind is classified as belonging to the lower nature, namely, derived from material principle, namely, earth, water, fire, ether and air. One need not enter into the philosophical aspects of Kapila's contribution. The theory of gunas has enriched the understanding of the types of human personalities, the temperament and behaviour. At the mental level, sattvik represents purity and clarity, Rajas represents agitation and misery and Tamasik torpidity. Ethically, they represent pure, alloyed and impure state respectively. Gita states that those with sattvik rise upward, Rajas stay at the earthly level and Tamasik go downward. The ultimate goal of man is to overcome involvement with the gunas and to become free for purpose of release from bondage. The gunas lend their colour to the senses, to the mind, to the intellect and determine their ultimate nature. To attain the state of "ataraxy", the individual has to overcome the gunas. Gita adds to and embellishes the Sankhian's concept of gunas, accepting its theory of evolution and placing a theistic superior power to control over the earlier godless Sankhian view of Prakriti and Purusha. The Sankhian system, propounded by Kapila is pre-buddhistic and conceived two basic primordial principles, prakriti a homogenous physical matter and the purusha. A state of equilibrium exists in Prakriti as long as there is a harmony of gunas. By the action of Purusha a state of disequilibrium sets in and with it evolution starts on two parallel lines—macro cosmic and micro cosmic. Prakriti gives place to mahat of macrocosm and buddhi of microcosm which individualises into self. Later mind, five senses of perception and five organs of action emerge with five subtle, and gross elements. Sankhian philosophy is the earliest and its

uniqueness is its view of the origin of mind form a physical basis. It is as important as the discovery that the brain is the seat of mind, a Hippocratic and Bhela's observation. Gita gives a theistic colour to the Sankhian doctrine. Besides, it combines the speculative theories of Sankhya with practical aspects of yoga analogous to the synthesis of vedas and upanishads as mentioned earlier.

The quest for man's mental equipoise and his physical and social well-being has been the endeavour of the philosophies of all lands—from the spiritually oriented Vedas and Upanishads to the materialistic schools of European Epicureanism and Indian Carvaca. Ataraxy, Shanti and Sthithaprajna, although terms from different schools of Philosophy, have a common meaning indicating tranquility. Vedic Saints, perhaps the most ancient among the class of thinkers, perceived an order in Nature which they called Rita. Worshipers of nature, they named a multitude of divinities who presided over every aspect of the Universe. Varuna is their deity who controlled the cosmic order. 'He was the custodian and chief executor of this eternal Law. Rita : this was at first the Law that established and maintained starts in their course ; gradually it became also the Law of right, the cosmic and moral rhythm, which everyman must follow if he would not go astray and get destroyed (Radhakrishnan, 1927). It will be a myopic vision of history if we were to content ourselves with the names of Claude Bernard, Sigmund Freud and Walter Cannon, while discussing any aspect of homeostasis.

The diary of mankind is not without entries of what the Russian writer Sorokin preferred to call the "Columbus complex" namely that each new discovery is in fact a rediscovery. A mental attitude that a law of constancy or order ruled the animate and inanimate world has come down to us from the beginning of human cognition. Vedic seers saw a parallel between

the universe and man. They found in man a corresponding order or a condition of equilibrium that they saw in Nature. To them man was a miniature universe while universe was man writ large. They found elements of dynamism and statism in both Nature and man. Rupa and Nama in man correspond to sthitham and yat in Nature. These are akin to mophac and eidon of Plato. While the Vedic men were analysers and admirers of Nature and divined gods all over, those of the Upanishads were philosophers who turned their searching eyes inwards to understand man's inner breezes' and to what Alexis Carrel called 'man the unknown'. This Upanishadic doctrine was re-echoed by Alexander Pope who expressed it as 'the proper study of mankind is man' "Dehasthya Sarva Vidya'.

The Gita brings out in the following lines the concept on Homeostasis at the Micro cosmic and the Dharmic level.

*yada-yada hi dharmasya
glanir bhavati bhārata
abhyutthanam adharmasya
tada tmanam sṛjamy aham*

Whenever there is a decline of righteousness and rise of Unrighteousness, O Bharata (Arjuna), then I send forth (create incarnate) Myself.

*paritrānaya sādhanam
vīnāśaya ca dukṛtam
dharmasamsthāpanarthāya
sambhavamī yuge-yuge.*

For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked and for the establishment of righteousness, I come into being from age to age.

The parallel between the macrocosm and microcosm has been brought out also in Sankhyan philosophy.

PSYCHOTHERAPY

Instances are not wanting in history of medicine where wars have contributed for its advances. Mention may be made of advances in psychiatric therapy by the introduction of ether a abreaction by Shorovon

and Sargeant. If Socrates indulged in philosophical discussions in the market place and in the street corners, if Immanuel Kant never moved out beyond 10 miles of the quite of his town, if the Vedic and Upanishadic seers sought the forest resort for their creativity, Gita's message was delivered on the battle field, a better context than which would not be appropriate for the message of action. Rudyard Kipling said there are only two classes of mankind—doctors and patients. Krishna and Arjuna are these dual representatives. Symbolically Krishna represents a master healer of the minds of humanity. His name itself literally means a "plougher" engaged in the process of ploughing the minds of men and Arjuna symbolising the patient in the state of anguish—"Soka Samvigna Manasah". They exemplify a typical Guruchela or a doctor-patient relationship. The effective essence of therapy is brought out in the very first two verses addressed to Arjuna and stimulating him for action.

*kutas tva kasmalam idam
visame samupasthitam
anarya justam asvargyam
akirtikaram arjuna*

Whence has this unmanly, heaven-barring and shameful dejection come upon you, at this juncture, O Arjuna

*klāibyam ma sma gamah partha
nai tat tvayy upapadyate
ksudram hṛdaya daurbalyam
tyaktvo tīstha paramtapa*

Yield not, O Partha, to feebleness. It does not befit you. Cast off this petty faint-heartedness. Wake up. O vanquisher of foes!

The significant word in the therapy is "Arise" ("uthishtha"). This arousal is from three areas of inactivity—from ignorance to knowledge, from apathy to a positive feeling, from inertia to purposeful activity. Krishna urges Arjuna in several other ways to fight, e.g., "Tasmad Yudhasya Bharata".

Gita brings out the ingredients of the relationship so well, that Krishna considers

his pupil as a friend capable of intelligent interrogation and exercising the power of discrimination. There is on the part of Arjuna a total sense of surrender and readiness to be instructed and to be told what is to be done. This is exemplified in the verse

*karpanyadosopahatasvabhavah
prechami tvam dharmasammudhacetah
yac chreyah syan niscitam bruhi tan me
sisyas teham sadhi mam tvam prapannam*

My nature is weighed down with the taint of feeble-mindedness; my understanding is confused as to duty. I entreat you, say definitely what is good for me. I am your disciple. Do instruct me who have taken refuge in you.

The Lord wears a tranquil countenance with a disarming smile while Arjuna is dejected and torn between intellectual doubts, ethical dilemma and filial bondage. The Greeks spoke of "filial", that is, a loving friendship between the doctor and the patient. Gita brings out the dual aspects of the concept of surrender, namely, the qualities of the surrendering individual and the demands of the one to whom one surrenders. The Lord after teaching many ways ultimately urges Arjuna to come to him abandoning everything and that He would lead him ("*Sarvadharmam parityagya mamekam saranam vraja*"). The above verse (2, 7) indicates the state of the surrendering individual. The master and the pupil in Gita display this which is extremely necessary for a wholesome rapport. The counselling on the battle field represents a crisis intervention and a good single shot therapy. The therapy has the effect of converting a withdrawing warrior saying "*Na Yothsya*" into a hero cleared of doubts declaring "*Thine will be done*".

*naato mohah smrtir labdha
vatprasadan maya cyuta
sthitoh smi gatasamdehah
karisyevacanam tava*

My delusion is destroyed. I have regained my memory through Your grace,

O Achyuta. I am firm ; I am free from doubt. I shall act according to your word.

This transformation of a splintered personality into a synthetic and wholesome one represents the essence of success of therapeutic alliance. It should not be forgotten that the Master did not force the ideas on to the pupil but suggested to him that he has taught him certain things but it was up to the latter to act as he likes ("*Yetha ichathi tatha kuru*"). Freud said that in Psychotherapy the patient should be made to become "his real nature and not ourselves." It may be seen that the final decision to act is taken by Arjuna while Krishna only cleared his doubts. This is reminiscent of Buddha's famous address to the Kalamas :

"This I have said to you O Kalamas, but you may accept it, not because it is a report, not because it is a tradition, not because it is so said in the past, not because it is given from the scripture, not for the sake of discussion, not for the sake of a particular method, not for the sake of careful consideration, not for the sake of forbearing with wrong views, not because it appears to be suitable, not because your preceptor is a recluse, but if you yourself understand that this is so meritorious and blameless, and when accepted, is for benefit and happiness, then you may accept it".

Modern students of family dynamics cannot fail to discern an element of double bind phenomenon of Bateson in Lord Krishna's advice. Arjuna perhaps is left with no alternative than to fight.

The immense potentiality in resources of human mind is brought about in the discourse. Considered from all these points of view Gita is a masterpiece of psychotherapy touching upon every aspect of mental activity.

WORK ETHICS

The Gita lays a great emphasis upon work for the sake of work alone, but not with a desire for the fruits of action.

Gandhiji in his Gujarathi writings on Gita called this 'Nishkamya Karma' as 'Anasakti yoga'. "Work is Yoga".

*karmany eva dhikaras te
me phalesu kadacana
ma karma phala hetur bhur
ma te sangostv akarmani*

Seek to perform your duty ; but lay not claim to its fruits. Be you not the producer of the fruits of karma ; neither shall you lean towards inaction.

Action for action's sake is the quintessence of the teaching of the Gita. Gita advocates work on the basis that action is superoir to inaction and by one's action example may be set for others to follow.

Gita supports the work for "world solidarity' (*loka Sangraha*) and glory of god (*kristnaya*) and world's good (*jagal nitaya*). one can perform one's duty placed as he is in his own position.

*sreyan svadharmo vigunah
paradharmat svanusthitat
svadharme nidhanam sreyah
paradharmo bhayavahah*

One's own dharma, though imperfect, is better than the dharma of another well discharged. Better death in one's own dharma ; the dharma of another is full of fear.

These verses carry a deep psychosocial significance and propagate the principles of prophylaxis of anomy which is the malaise of the modern society.

In modern times no medical man has stressed as much the value of work as William Osler. He calls this a "master word" in Medicine. "Though a little one, the master word looms large in meaning. . . It is the open sesame to every portal, the great equalizer in the world, the true philosopher's stone which transmutes all the base metals of humanity into gold. . . The miracles of life are with it : To the youth it brings hope, the middle age confidence and to the aged repose. . . It is directly responsible for all the advances in medicine during the last twenty-five years. . .

Laying hold upon it Hippocrates made observation and Science the wasp and woof of our art. Galen so read its meaning that fifteen centuries stopped thinking and slept until awakened by the 'De Fabrica' of Vesalius which is the very incarnation of the master word. With its inspiration Harvey gave an impulse to a larger circulation than he wont of, an impulse which we feel today. Hunter sounded all its heights and depths and stands out in our history as one of the great exemplars of its virtues. With it Virchow smote the rocks and the waters of progress gushed out ; in the hands of Louis Pasteur it proved a very talisman to open for us a new heaven in medicine and a new earth in surgery. . . This Master Word is Work ; though a little one it is fraught with momentous consequences if you can but write it on the tables of your heart and bind it upon our forehead". No wonder Karma Yoga has been exalted in Gita. "*Yoga Karmesu Kausalam*", "Yoga is perfection in work".

TRUCE WITH DEATH

Death in Indian philosophy does not indicate an end in itself. Life is conceived as a series and death is but an entrance to the next one in the series. The body is mortal while the soul is immortal. Life and death are comparable to waking and sleeping and in death the man while sleeping in his body wakes up in another body. This change in the body is compared to the changing the old garments for the new :

*vasamsi jirnani yatha vihaya
navani ghnati naro parani
tatha sarirani vihaya jirnany
anyani samyati navani dehi*

As a man casting off worn-out garments puts on new ones, so the embodied, casting off worn-out bodies enters into others that are new.

In its long journey towards the universal spirit, the time offered by one life is not adequate and several lives are needed and hence acquisition of successive physical

bodies. That passing on to another body is but a phase like childhood, youth and old age, is indicated by the verse.

*dehino smin yatha dehe
kaumaram yauvanam jara
tatha dehantaraprapthir
dhiras tatra na muhyati*

As the indweller in the body experiences childhood, youth and old age in the body, he also passes on to another body. The serene one is not affected thereby.

The attitudes to death vary : death defying, death denial and death acceptance. Considering the inevitability of death for everyone who is born and birth to all the dead, Gita prescribes a detached involvement with life and a cheerful acceptance of death. The succession of life and death is like the succession of night and day. A fostering of the death acceptance view enables one to come to an active truce with it. It can be employed to counsel the cardiac neurotics and in the areas of suicidology, intractably and terminally ill patients. Existential philosophical views on the dread of man, namely, the transience of one's existence, the fragility of one's being and the immensity of the fear of disappearance into nothingness can find a ready answer and relief in these Gita ideas.

SIXTH SENSE AND FRONTIERS OF COMMUNICATION

Gita carries observations of certain extrasensory phenomena. Sanjaya was the first war reporter the world has known. For example, he was empowered specially to narrate the happenings on the field of Kurukshetra to the blind king Dhritarashtra. The faculties of telepathy, television, and clairvoyance were conferred on him. The theory of incarnation is involved when Krishna tells Arjuna that the teaching in Gita is nothing new and He had imparted the same to several others earlier at different points of time.

imam vivasvate yogam

*proktavan aham avyayam
vivasvan manave praha
manur ikshvakave bravit*

This imperishable yoga, I declared to Vivasvat ; Vivasvat taught it to Manu, Manu told it to Ikshvaku.

*evam parampara praptam
imam raja rsayo viduh
yogo nastah paramtapa*

Thus transmitted in regular succession the royal-sages knew it. This yoga, by long efflux of time decayed in this world, O scorcher of foes.

The thoughts at the moment of death determine the type of the birth to follow. These types of extra sensory phenomena, though debated for long, have begun to find some support in the researches of physical sciences. The contribution of J. B. Rhine and Ian Stevenson need not hold us up here. Though genetics do not support the theory of transmigration and the role of the sixth Sense in communication phenomenon, the contributions from neurophysiology and physics have tended to render parapsychological theories less absurd. A proposition has been made that a mysterious atomic particle called positron is an electron that gains a positive electrical charge by moving backwards in time. This has an appeal for parapsychological researchers. A putting together of the ideas of Sir John Eccles, the Nobel Laureate neurophysiologist and Adrian Dobbs has offered further support. The insubstantial particles called positrons have their existence in a universe with five dimensions three of space and two of time. In one of these temporal modes a multiplicity of potential events, each a product of numerous subatomic possibilities explore a variety of routes of actualization. Creating of 'positronic' wave fronts, they are perceptible to the sensitive neurons conveying the information of the probable disposition of future events. Eccles has demonstrated that a single neuron is sensitive to respond

to the field of influence and to transmit it to several thousands of neurons. With these recent observations research on telepathy seems to have acquired a newer direction.

CONCLUSIONS

It has not been my task to deal exhaustively on Gita in relation to Mental Sciences. What little I have been able to understand as a student of Psychological medicine has been brought out in a way which may reveal more of immaturity and imperfection. As I said at the outset, Gita is open to interpretation in ways more than one. There is no finality about it. This talk on Murli Rao will be incomplete, if I fail to mention, his attitude toward learning, knowledge and research. These are ongoing phenomena and may not have an end. They go on as the old saying goes "until the sun begins to grow cold, the stars begin to grow old and the leaves of the Book of judgement begin to fold".

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