

Ethics and Globalization in the Light of Hinduism

Maya Mainkar

University of Pune, India

0301

The Asian Conference on Arts & Humanities 2013

Official Conference Proceedings 2013



iafor

iafor
The International Academic Forum
www.iafor.org

For the civilized society, spiritual moral and cultural development of mankind is of supreme importance. With the growth of science and technology spirituality started declining. Science strengthens the rationality, knowledge of universe, medicine and health while Religion is for the heart and mental health. Society is no machine to be known by its engine and gears or by its brand or company; it is made up of a unique species called as human being. They are individuals and because of their individuality, they are said to be unique. Human behavior is still a matter of research for the scientists all over the world as it is the ultimate outcome of many factors as genetics, circumstantial, psychological, social and emotional impacts. Human beings with positive qualities are asset to the nation. In this modern world of consumerism, materialism and globalization the societies are facing the problems on cultural and ethical issues. The world needs to have an orientation on the above issues. We need to shift our paradigm from worldliness to spirituality. But who will offer this orientation? Who will build the cultural and spiritual foundation for mankind? Of course religion provides the code of conduct for human beings. This paper is an attempt to visualize the current ethical issues in the light of Hinduism as we firmly believe that The *Bhagvad Gita* , the essence of *vedic* wisdom, provides the answer to the ethical issues.

Hinduism is the oldest of world's religion and the most diverse. The Gita explains the five basic truths to the living entities:- i) Jivas (living entities) ii) ishvara (the controller of the jivas) iii) prakriti (Material world) iv) Time (duration of existence of the material world v) karma (activity) . It believes in *reincarnation* and *Karma* (action). According to *Brihadaranyaka* , *Dharma means pure reality*. It is law, in harmony and order with the creator of the world *Brahman and the state of Brahma is satchidanand that means a state of pure truth, consciousness and bliss*. All Embodied souls are born in the state of *satchidanand* and it is the purest state of soul similar to Supreme soul. *Dharma* is nothing but the way of life. It is the philosophy which we follow throughout our life. According to the first President of India Dr Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan Hinduism cannot be defined but it can only be experienced. In Hinduism *Dharma* is nothing but the way of life. It is the philosophy which we follow throughout our life. In Hinduism *Dharma* regulates the conduct, action, intentions and dealings of the mankind. The basic foundation of Hinduism is Sacrifice and Detachment from worldly pleasures. The age of materialism and consumerism engrosses the mankind in worldly pleasures and indulges the mankind in lust, greed and anger. These three are considered to be the gates of Hell according to the scriptures. Ethical behavior is the necessity of modern world full of corruption. Felony and misdemeanor is prevailing all over the world. Earlier times, the leaders were men of words, but now a days leaders do not hesitate breaking their own promises. There is a need for ethics in politics as well as economy. Ethical failure is a universal phenomenon and needs correction. The world needs a vision, a kind of orientation to curb the ethical downfall. The world is now in the dungeon of skepticism. Socially conscious leadership is the need of time. The world has lost peace of mind and contentment.

Hindu Idea of Globalization- The world globalization has many dimensions. It can be used with multitude meanings. It also refers to the interconnectedness of trade,

commerce, technology and economy. Because of globalization the world has come closer. Today the term globalization has not limited to trade or commerce, to science and technology but it has overshadowed the cultures of the world. According to the Hindu scripture *Maha Upanishada*, the idea of universal family is clearly defined.

Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (Sanskrit: वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्. from "vasudha", the earth; "iva" = is as a; and "kutumbakam", family;) is a Sanskrit phrase [1] that means that the whole world is one single family.

The original verse is contained in *the Mahopanishad* VI.71-73. Subsequent *shlokas*/verses go on to say that those who have no attachments go on to find the *Brahman* (the one supreme, universal Spirit that is the origin and support of the phenomenal universe).

udAraH peshalAchAraH sarvAchArAnuvR^ittimAn |
antaH-sa^Nga-parityAgI bahiH saMbharavAniva |
antarvairAgyamAdAya bahirAshonmukhehitaH ||70||
ayaM bandhurayaM neti gaNana laghuchetasAm |
udAracharitanAm tu vasudhaiva kuTumbakam ||71||
bhAvAbhAva vinirmuktaM jarAmaraNavarjitaM |
prashAnta kalanArabhyaM nIrAgaM padamAshR^aya ||72||
eSA brAmhI sthitiH svachchA niShkAmA vigatAmaya |
AdAya viharannevaM saMkaTeShu na muhyati ||73||
(Mahopanishad- VI.70-73)

The above text is describing the '*lakShaNā*' (characteristics) and behaviour of great men who are elevated to the coveted *brAmhI sthiti* (one who has attained Brahman while still alive. The above says: अयं बन्धुरयं नेतृगिणना लघुचेतसां | उदारचरितानां तु वसुधैव कुटुम्बकं || ”

ayam bandhurayam neti ganana laghuchetasam | udaracharitanam tu vasudhaiva kutumbakam ||

Only small men discriminate saying: One is a relative; the other is a stranger. For those who live magnanimously, the entire world constitutes but a family.

The above verse is also found V.3.37 of Panchatantra (3rd c. BCE), in the in 1.3.71 of Hitopadesha - (12th c. CE).[1]

The statement is not just about peace and harmony among the societies in the world, but also about a truth that somehow the whole world has to live together like a family. This is the reason why Hindus think that any power in the world, big or small cannot have its own way, disregarding others. Hinduism thus believes in the concept of world as a family and universal brotherhood. It gives freedom of worship and belief. It

believes that all embodied soul (self) and the Supreme Soul (God) are identical, hence for Hindus, all the embodied souls, are brothers.

The Bhagvad Gita describes the two kinds of created beings- Divine and Demonic or nondivine. Demonic qualities are seen in most of the politicians and when the politicians are demonic then the demonic qualities percolates down to the common men. Demonic qualities get authorization by power. The Demoniatic do not know what is the purpose of their existence. They are not clean, in their thought actions and deeds, truthful and well behaved. Pride, anger, conceit, greed and harshness are the demonic qualities. *The Bhagvad Gita*

dambho darpo 'bhimānaś ca

krodhaḥ pārūṣyam eva ca

ajñānaṁ cābhijātasya

pārtha sampadam āsurīm

SYNONYMS

dambhaḥ — pride; *darpaḥ* — arrogance; *abhimānaḥ* — conceit; *ca* — and; *krodhaḥ* — anger; *pārūṣyam* — harshness; *eva* — certainly; *ca* — and; *ajñānam* — ignorance; *ca* — and; *abhijātasya* — of one who is born of; *pārtha* — O son of Pṛthā; *sampadam* — the qualities; *āsurīm* — the demoniac nature.[2]

This modern world is crowded with demoniac so as to create ethical society we need to understand sublime divine qualities-

<http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Epistles-VirtuesVices.htm>

Virtues and vices according to the Bible

Capital/Deadly Sins:

pride/arrogance-superbia

avarice/greed-avaritia

envy/jealousy-invidia

wrath/anger-ira

lust/impurity-luxuria

gluttony/voracity-gula

sloth/laziness-acedia

Principal Virtues:

humility/modesty-humilitas

generosity/charity-liberalitas

kindness/gratitude-humanitas

patience/compassion-patientia

chastity/purity-castitas

temperance/moderation-temperantia

diligence/fervor-industria[3]

Paramitas (set of virtues) as per Buddhism-

Charity -- the key of charity and love immortal;

Uprightness -- the key of harmony in word and act;

Forbearance -- patience sweet, that nought can ruffle;

Dispassion -- indifference to pleasure and to pain;

Dauntlessness -- the dauntless energy that fights its way to the supernal truth;

Contemplation -- the open doorway to truth.[4]

<http://www.theosophy-nw.org/theosnw/world/asia/rel-jal2.htm>

Noble qualities mentioned in the Quran-

Truthfulness-(IX: 119)

Trustworthiness-(IV: 58)

Justice-(XVI : 19)

Self restrain-(III: 134)

Gentleness of speech-(II: 83)

Humility - (XXXVIII: 83)

Sincerity, Courage and Fortitude - (III: 146). (II: 153)[5]

<http://www.al-islam.edu.pk/whatisislam/goodmaner.htm>

When compared, most of the religions preach the inculcation of similar virtues for the well being of mankind.

Twenty Six Virtues (Divine Qualities) as mentioned in the Bhagvad Gita-

The Bhagvad Gita is a song of God or a message of spiritual wisdom given by Lord Krishna. It is the subtle and accurate presentation of Vedic Knowledge. It explains the purpose of human existence in this material world. The Bhagvad Gita reveals the secrets of Birth and Death, result of karma, eternal soul, the purpose of human existence. The Gita with its timeless wisdom is relevant in this age also. It provides awareness of the eternity of soul to the mankind. The aim of the Bhagvad Gita is to

release the mankind from the ignorance of material existence. Our life is full of anxieties as we live in the world of non existence. We are put in this temporary material world because of our Karma or Action. Whatever the happiness and suffering we experience it is the ultimate result of our Karma. Message of the Gita is delivered because Arjun's dilemma was the biggest of all. He had to make a choice between fighting the war and killing his most revered guru, very dear friends, close relatives, and many innocent warriors, or running away from the battlefield for the sake of preserving the peace and nonviolence. Arjuna was reluctant to perform his duty as a warrior. As the message is imparted to the eternal individual (Arjuna) by the eternal Reality (Krishna), the teaching is also eternal. 5000 years ago Lord Krishna outlines 26 qualities of a gentleman –

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

abhayaṁ sattva-saṁśuddhir

jñāna-yoga-vyavasthitih

dānaṁdamaś ca yajñāś ca

svādhyāyas tapa ārjavam

ahiṁsā satyam akrodhas

tyāgaḥ śāntir apaiśunam

dayā bhūteṣv aloluptvaṁ

mārdavaṁ hrīr acāpalam

tejaḥ kṣamā dhṛtiḥ śaucam

adroho nāti-mānitā

bhavanti sampadaṁ daivīm

abhijātasya bhārata

śrī-bhagavān uvāca — the Supreme Personality of Godhead said; abhayaṁ — fearlessness; sattva-saṁśuddhiḥ — purification of one's existence; jñāna — in knowledge; yoga — of linking up; vyavasthitih — the situation; dānam — charity; damaḥ — controlling the mind; ca — and; yajñāḥ — performance of sacrifice; ca — and; svādhyāyaḥ — study of Vedic literature; tapaḥ — austerity; ā rjavam — simplicity; ahiṁsā — nonviolence; satyam — truthfulness; akrodhaḥ — freedom from anger; tyāgaḥ — renunciation; śāntiḥ — tranquillity; apaiśunam — aversion to fault-finding; dayā — mercy; bhūteṣu — towards all living entities; aloluptvam — freedom from greed; mārdavam — gentleness; hrīḥ — modesty; acāpalam — determination; tejaḥ — vigor; kṣamā — forgiveness; dhṛtiḥ — fortitude; śaucam — cleanliness; adrohaḥ — freedom from envy; na — not; ati-mānitā — expectation of honor; bhavanti — are; sampadam — the qualities; daivīm — the transcendental nature; abhijātasya — of one who is born of; bhārata — O son of Bharata [6]

i) Fearlessness ii) Purification of one's existence iii) Cultivation of spiritual knowledge iv) Charity v) Self-control vi) Performance of sacrifice vii) Study of

Scriptures (Vedas) viii) Austerity ix) Simplicity x) Non-violence xi) Truthfulness xii) Freedom from anger xiii) Renunciation xiv) Tranquility xv) Abstaining from slanders xvi) Compassion for the living world xvii) Freedom from covetousness xviii) Gentleness xix) Modesty xx) Steady determination xxi) Vigor xxii) Forgiveness xxiii) Fortitude xxiv) Cleanliness xxv) Freedom from envy xxvi) Freedom from Passion.

i) Fearlessness- Fearlessness is the first divine quality as it is the foundation of spirituality. Fear creates physical, mental and spiritual disturbances and embodied soul concentrates on ego and the object of fear. According to Hindu scripture there are two types of fear- a. External b. Internal. External fear is from external factors such as thieves, robbers snakes etc. also the fear of injury , fear of losing loved ones and friends, fear of breaking and challenging tradition and value system, and fear of breaking code of conduct contribute to external fear.

Internal Fear- i) Fear created by even thought of injustice and immorality.

ii) Fear arising out of impure or bad intentions.

Complete surrender to god brings fearlessness. It means to have complete faith in god, in his wisdom, in his justice and his presence.

ii) Purification of one's existence –(Satvasamshuddhi)-The Gita Says that the embodied souls can possess the transcendental qualities which are required to create an ethical society. Purity of thought, mind and emotions is called *satvasamshuddhi* Love for the supreme soul and detachment from the worldly pleasures brings purification of soul. When embodied soul gets indulge into conspiracy, dishonesty in business, profession and politics then the soul gets impure. Even if the person commits a mistake unknowingly and blames others then also the soul gets contaminated.

iii) Cultivation of spiritual knowledge-(*Jnanyogayavasthiti*)- Yoga here is a state of mind which remains undisturbed or unperturbed in success and failure, praise and condemnation, sorrow and happiness. It is the quality of human being to be engaged in the cultivation of knowledge, being in the state of spiritual advancement.

iv) Charity- *Danam*- Charity is considered to be the supreme quality of the mankind. There are different types of *Danam* for instance, *Gau danam* (cow donation), *Bhudanam* (Land donation), *annah danam* (food donation), *Vastra danam* (Clothes donation) and *Swarnadanam* (gold donation) but the most sublime is to donate fearlessness (*abhaya danam*). Charity given without expecting anything in return at proper time and place, to a person who is worthy of it is considered to be in the mode of goodness (*satvaguni danam*) But Charity performed with an expectation in return with some desire or vested interest or with unwillingness, is said to be charity in the mode of passion (*rajoguni danam*) and the charity performed at improper time , at impure place and to an undeserving person without proper intention is said to be the charity in the mode of ignorance.

dātavyam iti yad dānam

dīyate 'nupakāriṇe

deśe kāleca pātre ca

tad dānaṁ sāttvikam smṛtam

dātavyam — worth giving; iti — thus; yat — that which; dānam — charity; dīyate — is given; anupakāriṇe — irrespective of return; deśe — in a proper place; kāle — at a proper time; ca — also; pātre — to a suitable person; ca — and; tat — that; dānam — charity; sāttvikam — in the mode of goodness; smṛtam — is considered (The Bhagvad Gita chapter 17-20:21:22) [7]

Charity is giving donations to a person who has never given anything to you. Fearlessness can also be given as a charity, which is one of the noblest charity.

v) Self control- *Dama- Dama* means having a complete self control over body mind, material senses and thought. *Dama* means complete control over body mind and intelligence. Observing *Dama* is essential for the purification of one's existence. Self control includes non egotism and selfless acts.

vi) Performance of sacrifice-*Yajnan-* It is to scarify our ego and selfishness. Well being of others is on the priority. All actions are to be performed by the embodied soul for the sake of god. Service to the parent, teachers and spiritual teachers is included in *Yajnan*.

vii) Study of scriptures- *Swadhyaya-* Reading of Holy Scriptures and act on the principles of Dharma to attain sublime goal of life is *Swadhyaya*. It is a study of understanding oneself by the reading of scriptures. Reading of scripture gives knowledge and knowledge brings self awareness.

viii) Penance or Austerity- *Tapa-* It includes detachment of mind from gratification of senses. The root cause of unhappiness is gratification of senses. *Tapa* performed with simplicity of mind and observing silence bring out austerity of mind.

ix) Rectitude- *Arjavam-* It is the simplicity in words, thoughts and deeds.

x) Non-Violence- *Ahimsa-* Mahatma Gandhi, the father of our nation, has strongly advocated the principles of Non –violence (*ahimsa*) It means not to hurt anyone physically or by our speech and thoughts. When a person gets detached from this material world, walks on the path of *ahimsa*, Non Violence.

xi) Truth-*Satyam-* Here Truth means to say the things based on facts and reality scarifying our selfish motives. We must not distort the truth for personal interests. Truth is subjective, objective, relative and absolute hence here the term absolute truth is most appropriate as it synonym to God. Absolute truth is unconditional acceptance of reality.

xii) Anger Control- *Akrodha-* Anger is the worst pollutant for the pure soul. Anger is an ultimate result of the unfulfilled expectations. Anger takes away our power of reasoning. Anger is like a fire which burns the person who is angry.

xiii) Peace of mind – *Shanti-* It is a state of mind which is freed from anger, envy jealousy with the world outside. It is a state of calmness, bliss and tranquility not corrupted by the vices.

xiv) Abstaining from Slanders- *Apaisunam*- This is one of the significant qualities for character building. We must not find faults in others as we have to inculcate divine godly qualities in ourselves.

xv) Renunciation- *Tyag*- *Tyag* means aversion from worldly pleasures. While living in the world of non existence or illusion we must keep ourselves detached from inside. Our desires are the cause of our suffering into this world. We must not have any desire for the worldly and sensual pleasures. One has to renounce the fruit of action.

xvi) Compassion- *Daya*- Compassion is the fundamental quality of the character. It means to develop empathy, sensitive approach and non callousness towards other living entities. It is to foster kind attitude towards weak and suffering living entities and not to be cruel and abusive.

xvii) Freedom from Covetousness- *Alolupatvam*- mankind should be vigilant towards its covetousness for worldly pleasures. It is to get oneself free from greed. It is to get rid of the desire to possess in excess what is not required or needed. It is a strong desire to possess material wealth. *Alolupatvam* is to detach oneself from this desire.

xviii) Gentleness of thought and action- *Mardavam*- It is a quality to be gentle and kind to even those who have deliberately hurt you by their action or words. It is one of the divine qualities. *Mardavam* means not to be harsh but provide a strong hand of support with a soft touch of humanity. It is to support and help weak with compassion and mercy. It is to be gentle with the ill-wishers also. It is to possess an amiable disposition, to be considerate and kind.

xix) Modesty- *Hrih*- It is the absence of boastfulness or vanity. It is a feeling of shame to the thought which is inappropriate, unjust or against the code of conduct.

xx) Absence of agitation- *Apacalam*- It is the determination against the temptations one has to confront while living in this material world.

xxi) Vigour- *Tej*- It means power or strength to help those needing protection. It also means luster or radiance emitted by spiritual practice. It is the divine quality acquired only with the purity of intentions and thoughts.

xxii) Forgiveness- *Kshama*- It is the non revengeful attitude towards one's offenders. *Kshama* is considered to be the highest virtues in most of the religions. It is very difficult to forget and forgive. Forgiveness ultimately results in peace of mind. With forgiveness one can get rid of anger, the worst enemy of mankind.

xxiii) Fortitude- *Dhritih*- It is a steady state of mind in enduring duress and having courage and capacity to defend righteousness.

xxiv) Cleanliness- *Shoucham*- It is to be pure internally and externally so as to be spiritually worthy. In this corrupt world this is one of the rarest qualities of the mankind but one of the finest virtues.

xxv) Absence of Malice- *Adroha*- It is absence of envy. It is to adopt non interfering attitude in the interest of others. Like anger envy causes internal damage to the personality. It makes the soul impure. *Adroha* helps in maintaining mental hygiene.

xxvi) Absence of false ego- *Na-atimanita*- It is the absence of pride and boastfulness. It is different from *Hrih* or modesty as it is not expecting honor from others. It is to adopt humbleness in spite of having strength, wealth, knowledge and power.

These qualities save mankind from ethical downfall. In the battlefield of Kurukshetra, Arjuna had an ethical dilemma, which all human beings experience at some or the other time. The root cause of our anxiety is material existence. These qualities are of utmost important when we see mafias turned in to politicians, criminals and muscle men are used to win elections, dacoits are contestants in elections, dozens of ministers having tainted records, capitalists exploiting labors and so on. Dictators and tyrants become successful only with the help of underworld. The pages of History are painted in the red color with the names of bloodthirsty villains who are hungry for power. Criminalization in politics and politicization of criminals has brought the globe on ethical downfall. The main objective of the Bhagvad Gita is to free mankind from the illusions of material existence and understand oneself and one's connection with the supreme soul. The Gita awakens the ignorant souls and make them aware of their existence in the non existing world. Those who follow these eternal ordinances are naturally endowed with the virtues. The divinity in mankind is activated by following these eternal time tested instructions of Lord Krishna and their actions and deeds will never be inappropriate.

iator

Bibliography-

1. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vasudhaiva_Kutumbakam
2. Bhagvad –Gita- Chapter 16 verse 4
3. Bhagvad Gita As It Is- Bhakti Vedanta Book Trust, Mumbai, 1986.
4. <http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Epistles-VirtuesVices.htm>
5. <http://www.theosophy-nw.org/theosnw/world/asia/rel-jal2.htm>
6. <http://www.al-islam.edu.pk/whatisislam/goodmaner.htm>
7. Bhagvad –Gita- Chapter 16 verse 1
8. Geeta Rahasya- Bal Gangadhar Tilak- Kesari Mudranalaya Pune
9. Bhagvad Gita As It Is- Bhakti Vedanta Book Trust, Mumbai, 1986.
10. Bhagvad Gita- Swami Ramsukhdas- Gita Press Gorakhpur India,
11. Sarth Dasbodh- Laxman Ramchandra Pangarkar, S B Dhawale Publisher, Pune.
12. Samarthanche Niti Shatak- Sunil Chincholkar- S B Dhawale Publisher, Pune.

