

Psychotherapy in Shreemad-Bhagwad-Geeta (Krishna-Upachaar for Arjun-Rog)

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Shreemad-Bhagwad-Geeta (The Geeta) is the most influential scripture not only in the cultural, religious and theoretical aspects, but also in the academic, philosophical, and practical phases of individual and social lives. Currently, there are discussions among academicians, philosophers, and mental health practitioners to utilize this discourse also for psychological treatment. Krishna-Arjun communication in the Geeta is almost similar to the client-therapist relationship in the modern day clinical practice. The Geeta's dialogue transpired in the battlefield (Kurukshetra) of the famous Mahabharat war, when one of the most influential warriors of the Pandav side, Arjun, became psychologically disturbed (melancholic), and decided to flee. His charioteer, Krishna, then assumed the therapist's position and provided the essential counseling (therapy) to bring Arjun back to the war. The Krishna-Arjun conversation during that time can be easily interpreted in the modern psychotherapeutic procedures: supportive, cognitive, behavioral, grief-resolution, motivational enhancement, hypnosis, etc. Krishna used an eclectic approach to heal Arjun's mind and motivate him towards his Kshetriya duty. Thus, I see the Geeta as a form of Krishna's treatment to heal Arjun's mind, i.e., Krishna-Upachaar for the Arjun-Rog. This paper tries to establish this proposition.

Keywords: Communication, counseling, grief-resolution, hypnosis,

mental health, psychotherapy, supportive

Introduction

Shreemad-Bhagwad-Geeta (The Geeta) is the eighteen-chapter (adhyaaya) scripture extracted from the Chapters 25 to 42 of the Bhishma Parva of the Mahabharat, considered the fifth Veda (Shreemad-Bhagwad-Geeta & Vishnu-Sahashranaam, 2009). The Geeta is not only a holy book for the Hindus (sanatana dharmawalambee), but also an ideal work, with the academic, philosophical, social, cultural, and practical significance, to all the mankind (Risal, A., 2023a; Swamy Chinmayananda, 2002).

The Geeta has been translated into almost all the languages of the world; explanations and commentaries have been written by many academic, religious, and spiritual intellectuals. This one text has been interpreted in such a way that great scholars of different levels and sects have commented and explained the Geeta as they see appropriate (Jeste, D.V. & Vahia, I.V., 2008; Kalra, B. et al., 2018; Kalra, S. et al., 2017; Pattabhiram, B.V. & Deekshitulu, P.V., 2017; Shukla, S., 2018).

Being an academician and clinician (psychiatrist), I have taken the Geeta as an important reference material not only to understand the psyche or the ‘mind’ (mana) of an individual person (patient or client), but also to recognize my ‘self’ (atma-anusandhaan) (Risal, A., 2023a).

Studying the Geeta, I feel that I am going through a psychological case-history, and reading the dialogues between a psychologically-disturbed client (Arjun) and an experienced therapist (Krishna). Hence, some veteran spiritual masters, researchers, academicians, and practitioners have considered the Geeta to be the Krishna-method of treatment (Krishna-Upachaar) of the Arjun-disease (Arjun-Rog) (Balodhi, J.P. & Keshavan, M.S., 2011; Bhatia, S.C. et al., 2013; Dhakad, M.K., 2018; Dillbeck, M.C.,

1991; Pandurangi, A.K. et al., 2014; Reddy, M.S., 2012; Swamy Chinmayananda, 2002; Yogananda, P., 2007). I have also brought forward this concept in many academic discussion forums (Risal, A., 2021, 2022a, 2022b, 2023b), and publications (Risal, A., 2020-21, 2022-23, 2023a).

Debates and dialogues (communication) are of great significance in the Hindu (sanatana dharma) culture. Vade Vade Jayate Tattvabodha is a well-known saying, which means ‘an elemental perception (cognition or insight) arises from efficient communication, dialogues and discussions (or arguments)’. Therefore, each of the Puraans, Upanishads and Kathaa-Bhaashyas (holy story books) in this culture appears in the form of a dialogue between at least two people; e.g., Shiva-Parvati dialogue in Ramayan, Shukadev-Parikshit dialogue in Shreemad-Bhagavatam, Guru-disciple, and King-Minister dialogue in many other scriptures (Risal, A., 2023a; Swamy Chinmayananda, 2002; Yogananda, P., 2007). Similarly, the Geeta also begins as a conversation between Dhritarashtra (the King) and Sanjay (the Minister) and continues in the discussion between Shri Krishna (the Charioteer) and Arjun (the Prince).

The hidden agenda of the Geeta Krishna-Arjun dialogue, however, was to solve Arjun's doubts by Shri Krishna, and lead him to the Mahabharat war by explaining his Kshetriya duty (Shreemad-Bhagwad-Geeta & Vishnu-Sahashranaam, 2009). It is this dialogue that ultimately makes Arjun (the Prince) of Pandavas, the winner of the Mahabharat war.

However, if we go through the Mahabharat epic, Arjun's victory was not so simple. He was under a terrible stress at the beginning of the war, and was in such a psychologically weakened state, that he declared to give up the war. This psychological state of Arjun is explained as Arjun disease (Arjun-Rog).

In fact, if we reciprocate this state of Arjun in our life, we may suffer from Arjun-Rog at any point of our everyday business,

in the moments of struggle in our life, in ups and downs. The same truth has been revealed in the Geeta. But, with the treatment of Krishna (Krishna-Upachaar), Arjun is again motivated to go to war with refreshed mind and a clear insight. We can also move ahead in our life if we are also lucky enough to get the therapist like Krishna.

I have considered the Krishna-Arjun dialogue (approximately 45-60 minutes long) in the Geeta, which appears in the seven hundred stanzas (shlokas), over the eighteen chapters, to be the metaphor for our modern-day psychotherapeutic practice (role-play). I have tried to establish this psychological interpretation in the present paper.

Arjun – Personality

In the background of the Mahabharat, Arjun is a Prince, the beloved grandson of patriarch Bhishma, a worthy disciple of Acharya Drona, a person who has earned the title of "best archer" (sarvashrestha dhanurdhar), who won the Draupadi-Swayambar (chosen by beautiful Draupadi), blessed by Mahadev, the hope of all the Pandavs, and the beloved friend and brother-in-law of Shri Krishna.

In this context, pride and arrogance might have been invisible in some corner of his mind. On the one hand, due to the injustice done by the Kauravs, the defeat in the gambling duel (game of dice), the disrobing of Draupadi (cheer-haran), the suffering during the twelve-years' exile (vana-baas) and one year incognito exile (agyaat or gupta-baas), his obsession with victory reached its peak due to the feeling of repressed frustration and revenge. On the other hand, due to the truthfulness of his eldest brother Yudhishtir, the integrity of his revered uncle Vidur, and his respect for Bhishma, Drona, etc., resisted him from fighting for the legitimate right. Although Draupadi's on and off remarks towards Pandav's unexplainable resistance would further attack his self-esteem, his psyche was probably waiting for the appropriate time and situation, to surge. However, being a supporter

of justice and dharma, no matter how much injustice or tyranny he (and Pandavs) suffered, Arjun must have an abundant sense of love, respect, and brotherhood towards Dhritarashtra and his sons.

Arjun Melancholy (Arjun-Vishaad Yog)

The above-mentioned psychological reactions—suppressed pre-conceived feelings, preoccupation with victory and arrogance of superiority—in Arjun, came to the fore when the conch sound was produced (shankha-naada) in the battlefield from both his side (Pandavs) and the opposition (Kauravs), and Shri Krishna placed Arjun's chariot between the two armies as per his request [The Geeta 1(24)].

In the battlefield (Kurukshetra), seeing his own relatives (ancestral, maternal, paternal), teachers, and friends on the opposite side, ready to destroy own brothers and kith-kins, Arjun became simultaneously anxious and fearful. Additionally, it may not be true to claim that there was no fear of defeat in the inner heart (mind) of Arjun.

Arjun, ultimately started to behave like a psychologically-disturbed patient due to the admixture of untimely compassion and grief, in front of Shri Krishna on the battlefield (Kuruksetra). If one studies the stanzas of the first chapter of the Geeta from the 28th verse onwards, it will not be so difficult for anyone to portray Arjun as a psychologically-disturbed individual. Arjun was actually suffering from situational melancholia or depression. Therefore, Maharshi Vyasa has portrayed an excellent nosology by naming the first chapter of the Geeta as Arjun- Vishaad Yog (Shreemad-Bhagwad-Geeta & Vishnu-Sahashranaam, 2009).

The following stanzas from the Geeta typically reveal the symptoms of fear/anxiety in Arjun:

1. *Siddanti mama gastrani mukham cha parishushyati
Vepathushcha sharire me romharshascha jaayate* [The Geeta 1(29)].

Meaning: My limbs are aching, my mouth is dry, the body is shivering (trembling) and the hairs are erect.

2. *Gandivam sanshrate hastattwakchaika paridahiyate
Na cha shaknomyawasthatum bhramatiwa cha me mana* [The Geeta 1(30)].

Meaning: My Gandiva (bow) falls from my hand, my skin is burned, I am unable to get up, and my mind is confused.

The following stanzas depict syndromal melancholia:

1. Opposite thoughts:
*Na kangkchhye bijayam Krishna na cha rajyam sukhani cha
Kim no rajyena Govinda kim bhogairjivitena waa* [The Geeta 1(32)]

Meaning: I don't want victory, nor do I want kingdom or happiness. What is the purpose of all this?

2. Repentance/sin:
*Aho bata mahatpaapam kartum byawasita bayam
Yadrajyasukhalovena hantum swajanamudhyataa* [The Geeta 1(45)]

Meaning: It is so sad that we are prepared to commit a great sin by killing our own relatives just for the sake of this state pleasure.

3. Desire to die/ death-wishes and discouragement/ despair:
*Yadi mamapratikaramashastram shastrapaanaya
Dhaartarashtraan rane hanyustanme kshemataran bhavet* [The Geeta 1(46)]

Meaning: Even if I get killed by the sons of *Dhritarashtra* (*Kauravs*), it will be beneficial.

In fact, the arguments and illustrations given by Arjun in the stanzas 31 to 44 of the First Chapter sound like the arguments of a scholar. But those escapist voices expressed in frustration and sadness after the initiation of the war (*shankha-naada*) in the battlefield were untimely.

But Shri Krishna listens to all those arguments calmly.

Arjun further talks about bad omens, sin of killing the relatives or friends. He argues that the death of the male warriors result in the corruption of the clan women, resulting in the birth of cross-breeds (hybrids) and disruption of patriarchy, destruction of clan culture (swa-dharma), and all of the patriarchs and themselves would end up in hell [The Geeta 1(31-44)].

Finally, he announces: "I will not fight". Then, he leaves his bow (Gandiva) and arrows over the floor, and sits behind the chariot [The Geeta 1(47)].

Psychotherapy Process (Initiation of Krishna-Upachaar)

Throughout the first chapter, Shri Krishna remains silent. In fact, this also appears as an excellent art of psychotherapy. Giving the clients (patients) full opportunity to speak means helping them to express their pain, suffering and feelings. Similar to the opening of window in a hot room during the summer, resulting in cool breeze entering the room gives a pleasant feeling, providing an opportunity to express the frustrations, latent desires and feelings of a psychologically disturbed individual helps to win the trust of the patient and the patient opens up all his secrets in front of the doctor, this is called ventilation process. In fact, psychotherapy can be successful only if the patient is active and the doctor is passive.

In the first chapter, Krishna calmly listens to all the feelings expressed by Arjun. He identifies Arjun's mental status; melancholy which is filled with regret, tempered by the possible death of relatives and repressed inner feelings, eagerness for victory and

anxiety of defeat, overflowing with inferiority complex, driven by impulsiveness and escapist thinking.

Although it is difficult to establish the possible diagnosis of Arjun's mental health situation retrospectively, the differential diagnoses of 'Acute Stress Reaction' or 'Adjustment Disorder, mixed anxiety (panic) and depressive (predominant grief) reaction' could be considered on the basis of modern diagnostic classification system (WorldHealthOrganization, 1992).

Therefore, Krishna might have assessed the possible crisis on the battlefield and planned the most suitable psychological treatment method "crisis intervention" to resolve it.

Objectives of Krishna-Upachaar:

The two main objectives of Krishna's treatment (Krishna Upachaar) plan are:

1. To remove Arjun's worries of regret and sin, and
2. To make Arjun eager to fulfill his Kshetriya duties (to motivate him for action: the war) again

Psychological Treatment Approaches

The approaches were eclectic- an integrative strategy, or a therapeutic framework that draws upon multiple theories, techniques, and practices in order to create a tailored treatment for individuals. According to the modern psychological terminology, supportive, cognitive, motivational enhancement, grief-resolution, role transition, catharsis and ventilation, and hypnotherapy were the various techniques used by Krishna for Arjun's treatment (Ajinkya, S.A. et al., 2015; Balodhi, J.P. & Keshavan, M.S., 2011; Bhatia, S.C. et al., 2013; Pandurangi, A.K. et al., 2014; Pattabhiram, B.V. & Deekshitulu, P.V., 2017; Reddy, M.S., 2012; Sharma, N., 2014; Shukla, S., 2018; Sugumaran, S. & Hareesma, A.V., 2017; Verma, N. & Singh, A., 2014).

Supportive Approach

Initially, Arjun was not psychologically-minded; he was not fully ready for psychotherapy. He still considered Krishna as a friend/charioteer who had promised not to use any weapon in the war. So, to cheer up the tearful and distraught Arjun, and for bringing back his psychological courage, Shri Krishna smiles and says:

*Kutastwaa kashmalamidan bishame samupasthite
Anaryajushtamswagryamakirtirkamarajuna [The Geeta 2(2)].
Klaibyam ma sma gama partha naitattvayupapadhyate
Chhudram hridaya daurbalyam tyaktwottistha parantapa [The
Geeta 2(3)].*

Meaning: Do not be infatuated, do not be cowardly and impotent, do not act contrary to this Arya conduct, wake up, wake up.

In fact, if you find a friend who listens or talks when you are suffering from mental pain, you will think of that friend as a great support. The above-mentioned words of Krishna does the same thing. This provided a good opportunity for Arjun to express his grievances.

Arjun, then started telling, “How can I kill Bhishma and Drona? I shall beg for alms rather than this...” Tears started rolling over his face.

Therapeutic Alliance

However, after a while, as a result of constant persuasion by Krishna, Arjun ultimately decided to take shelter of Krishna. The past childhood and adolescent stories of Krishna’s courage and greatness also came to his mind; which probably helped Arjun to think of giving ‘a chance’ to Krishna. Arjun then pleaded Krishna to accept him as a disciple and requested him to demonstrate the correct path:

*Karpanyadoshopahata svavabah
Prichchhami twam dharmasammudhacheta*

*Yachheyasya nischittam bruhi tanme
Shishyastyeham shadhi maam twam prapannam* [The Geeta
2(7)]

In this way, Arjun took refuge with Krishna, giving him the position of the Guru or advisor above his friend or a relative. From here, the client-therapist relationship between the two of them was initiated. This was the actual establishment of therapeutic alliance between them. This is also the perfect example of Guru-Shishya (Chela) Relationship, in which the client has immense belief in the therapist and considers him a friend, philosopher, or guide (Neki, J.S., 1973; Vincenzo Di, N., 2022). Ultimately, Krishna treatment (Krishna-Upachar) of Arjun's disease (Arjun-Rog) started.

Cognitive Approach

First of all, Krishna deems Arjun's untimely grief unjustified considering his dilemma and duty-derelicted state. Arjun's seemingly scholarly argument was unparalleled to his inappropriate grief. Krishna states that the Pandits neither care about the living nor the dead.

*Ashochyaananvashochastam pragyaavadansha bhashase
Gatasoonagatashunscha nanushochanti pandita* [The Geeta 2(11)].

Then, Krishna presents the parables of previous births and rebirths in order to alleviate Arjun's possible regret, fear and anxiety of sin related to fratricide. Life and death happen in every individual, and the birth-death cycle is the truth of nature. We all were yesterday, we are today, and we shall be tomorrow, as well.

*Nah tvevaaham jatu nasan na twam neme janaadhipaah
Na chaiva na bhavishyaama sarve vayamathaparam* [The
Geeta 2(12)].

Just as the body keeps changing in childhood, youth and old age, but the individual remains the same, so the body keeps on taking birth and dying.

Then Krishna starts giving many allegories saying that the body is impermanent and the person should not worry about it. After explaining in many verses that the body is imperishable and unreal, Krishna begins to explain the importance of the imperishable, eternal and true soul.

Na jayate mriyate wa kadaachit, nayam bhutva bhavita wa na bhuyah

Ajo nitya sashvatoyam purano, na hanyate hanyamaane sharire
[The Geeta 2(20)].

Vasaansi jirnani yathaa vihaaya, navani grinhati naroparaani
Tathaa sharirani vihaaya jirna, anyani sanyaati navaani dehi
[The Geeta 2(22)].

Nainam chhindanti shastrani, nainam dahati paawaka
Na chainam kledayantyaapo, na shoshayati marutah [The Geeta 2(23)].

Avyakto yamachintyo yamavikarya yamuchyate
Tasmadevam viditvainan nanu shochitumarhasi [The Geeta 2(25)].

In this way, Krishna tried to alleviate Arjun's guilt regarding the thought "I am the killer", anxiety of sin, and untimely compassion or grief, showing the importance of an incorruptible, eternal soul. Krishna says, "Arjun! You are never a killer because the soul cannot be killed or destroyed by weapons, fire, water, or air".

Arjun remained silent even after Krishna's discourse on the immortality of the soul. Then, Krishna tried to explain from a philosophical point of view. He says that since birth and death happen in a regular cycle, it is completely inappropriate to grieve over this inevitable matter.

Jatasya hi dhruvo mrityurdhruvam janma mritasya cha
Tasmad apariharyerthe na twam sochitu marhasi [The Geeta 2(27)].

Later, Krishna reminds of the secret fact that since individuals are always latent before birth and will remain latent even after death, it is futile to worry about the body that comes into manifestation only for a short period of time. In the physical world as well, although the action is expressed, the cause cannot always be expressed. In the same way, meta-physically, the soul is the unexpressed cause and the body is the expressed action. In this way, Krishna considers Arjun's grief to be unreasonable even on the basis of the modern day “cause and effect relationship” [The Geeta 2(28)].

Motivational Approach

Even after presenting these cognitive-based theories; both physical and meta-physical, Arjun remained silent.

Now, Krishna moves from knowledge to action; the motive being to try to remove Arjun's untimely grief and direct him towards war, through a series of different arguments. While giving a lesson on self-righteousness, Krishna says that for the Kshetriyas, there is no greater virtue than war, the door of heaven opens on it.

Swadharmapi chawekshya na bikampitu marhasi..... [The Geeta 2(31)].

Sukhina Kshetriya partha lavante yuddhamidrisham [The Geeta 2(32)].

Further, explaining it in detail, Krishna describes the disadvantage of fleeing without engaging in the battle. “If you don't fight against self-righteousness and fame, it will be a sin. This dishonor shall be greater than death” [The Geeta 2(33-34)]. Adding to that, Krishna shows the fear of cowardice if he does not go to war, of being talked about by fugitives, of having to listen to the unruly, etc. [The Geeta 2(35-36)].

Then he mentions about the double benefit of going to war; “If you die in the war, you will get the heaven. If you win, you will get the entire kingdom”.

*Hato wa praapsyasi swargam, jitvaa waa bhokshyase mahim
Tasmaduttishtha kaunteya yuddhaaya kritanischaya* [The Geeta
2(37)].

Perhaps considering Arjun's inner fear of war and the hidden anxiety of defeat etc., Krishna then begins to preach equanimity:

*Sukhadukkhe same kritwaa laabhaalaabhau jayaajayau
Tato yuddhaaya yujyaswa naivam paapamavaapsyasi* [The
Geeta 2(38)].

Behavioral Approach (Karma Yog)

The teachings of Karma Yog and deterministic wisdom to become knowledgeable and develop a well-adjusted personality (sthita-pragya) with positive mental health (Kumar, A. & Kumar, S., 2013), with an ability to control the senses, and practice of proper meditation etc. come in the subsequent verses [The Geeta 2(39-46)].

The following stanza is still considered to be the most famous. It displays the importance of desire-less action (nishkaam karma) with an intention of removing the desire-prone anxiety in Arjun.

*Karmanyevaadhikaraste ma faleshu kadaachana
Ma karmafalaheturbhurmatesangostyakarmani* [The Geeta
2(47)].

In order to advance this theory, Krishna stresses upon the significance of Yog.

*Yogastha kuru karmaani sangam tyaktva Dhananjaya
Siddhyasiddhyo samo bhutva samatvam Yoga uchyate* [The
Geeta 2(48)].

While Krishna was talking about all these things, Arjun also gradually gets interested in the conversation. Arjun, who remained silent until the 53rd stanza, finally asks about the characteristics of a well-adjusted personality (sthitapragya) [The Geeta 2(54)]. Positive changes are thus slowly visible within Arjun.

Then Krishna starts talking about the importance of self-restraint, control of the senses and self-observation, in order to develop a well-adjusted personality (sthitapragya) [The Geeta 2(55-61)].

In the 62nd and 63rd stanzas, Krishna explains the probable cause and path of any person's downfall.

Dhyaayato vishayanpunsha sangasteshupajayate

Sangat sanjayate kaama kaamaatkrodhobhijayate [The Geeta 2(62)].

Krodhaadbhavati sammoha sammohaatsmritivibhrama

Smritibhranshaad buddhinasho buddhinashaad pranahsyati [The Geeta 2(63)].

Meaning: If someone always indulges in sense-pleasure, it leads to undue interest in the pleasurable things and activities. Excessive desire for pleasure may not be always fulfilled or satisfied, which will bring anger. Anger leads to infatuation, which ultimately makes the person deluded. Deluded individual will have loss of his intellect and then there will be destruction in his personality.

The second chapter, actually appears as a summary of the Geeta. Krishna has tried to give psychological treatment through various means to destroy Arjun's doubts, anxiety, grief and indolence through psychological counseling, complemented by beautiful examples and constructive arguments. First of all, he provides reasoning to increase Arjun's enthusiasm to listen. He tries to prove the immortality of the soul, which is subtler than the five senses. Then, Krishna works to remove the fear of death and pain of sorrow present in Arjun. He explains, Arjun's duty as per his Kshetriya tradition, at that time, was to take part in the war. In the same way, he has advocated the infallible principle of progress, saying that it was useless to worry about defeat, advised to live only in the present, and to give up vain sorrows and worries of the past and the future. He also suggests to sacrifice everything to God. Within this Chapter (adhyaya), there is Shaankhya Yog, Gyaana Yog, and Karma Yog.

The importance of meditation is also touched.

All these aspects (Yog) have been elaborated in detail in the subsequent chapters (adhyaaya) of the Geeta.

Humanistic Approach

Krishna also gives special emphasis on the power and capabilities of the individual self, and illustrates how the person alone will be responsible for his actions, growth or otherwise.

*Uddharedaatmanaatmaanam natmaanawasaadayet
Atmaiba hyaatmano bandhu ratmaiwa ripuraatmana* [The Geeta 6(5)].

Therapeutic Hindrances

Despite all these efforts of Krishna, Krishna-Upachar was not being productive; some hindrances were affecting the therapeutic relationship. Above steps were not successful in resolving the ongoing crisis situation at Kurukshetra, and to completely cure the Arjun-Rog. The reason for these interferences was the ambivalent situation of Arjun. He was questioning inside his mind: “Is Krishna really the God? Isn’t he the same Gopal (my aunt’s son; my cousin Kanhaiya)? Will he be able to eliminate my ‘sorrow’?”

Arjun had expressed ‘doubt’ regarding Krishna’s discourse at many places in the Geeta.

It was the real situation of the trust-mistrust dilemma, which was deterring the therapeutic growth.

Achievements Till Then

However, Krishna-Upachar had achieved so much in the due course of the therapy.

Indirect associative focusing: Krishna (the therapist) had raised several relevant topics in the previous chapters (2-9) without directly forcing them on to Arjun (the client): Shaankhya Yog, Karma

Yog, Gyaana Yog, Dhyaana Yog, and many more. Thus, Krishna was successful in inducing ‘hypnotic state’ in Arjun.

In the Chapter 10 (Bibhuti Yog), Krishna declares: “I am the best of everything - Omnipotent, Omnipresent....”

Arjun was actually in the hyper-suggestible state and Krishna had already established the authoritative position. These two situations are the most important and favorable conditions for hypnotherapy which Krishna was planning to apply in order to make Krishna-Upachar fruitful and successful (Ajinkya, S.A. et al., 2015).

Hypnotherapy

In the start of the Chapter 11 (Vishwaroop-Darshan-Yoga), Arjun was already in the suggestible state. He admits Krishna to be the ‘God’, and is convinced by the Lord Krishna’s philosophy imparted upon him till now. He then wishes to see Krishna’s universal form (Vishwaroop) [The Geeta 11(1-4)].

Krishna then provides direct authoritative suggestion: “See now my opulence, hundreds of thousands of my divine forms” [The Geeta 11(5)]. He, further says; “You may see ‘whatever you wish to see’ within me” [The Geeta 11(7)]. “But you cannot see me with your present eyes, therefore I shall give you the divine eyes (divya drishti)” [The Geeta 11(8)].

Through the process of creative visualization, Arjun was encouraged to envision his desired goal at the battlefield, in the hypnotic state. Krishna declares: “Your dreaded enemies (Bhisma, Drona, Karna, Jayadratha) have already been destroyed. So, you wake up and enjoy your kingdom.....”[The Geeta 11(33-34)].

Arjun was at first in the altered state of consciousness. He gets awed and terrified by visualizing Krishna’s vishwaroop, and requests him to come back to his original form [The Geeta 11(45)].

Krishna then responds: “You have been perturbed and bewildered... Now let it be finished...With a peaceful mind, you can now see the form you desire” [The Geeta 11(49)]. Later, Arjun is relieved: “Seeing your (Krishna’s) original form, I am now composed in mind; and I am now restored to my original nature” [The Geeta 11(51)].

In the therapeutic process, post-hypnotic suggestions given to a client under hypnosis, affects the client’s behavior in a desired manner; action or the feeling or an internal physical changes may occur in the client, after the hypnosis session. Those forms of suggestions help in increasing adherence to therapy and to carry out the assigned tasks. Thus, Krishna says: “Oh Arjun! Whoever does his work for me, being devoted to me, devoid of attachment, and free from enmity towards all beings, he surely comes to me, or becomes me.”

*Matkarmakrinmatkarmo madbhakta sangawarjita
Nirbaira sarwabhuteshu ya sa maameti Pandava* [The Geeta 11(55)].

Trust and Faith (Bhakti Yog)

Trust with the treating physician is the most important element for maintaining the therapeutic relationship. So, Krishna declares, “Oh Arjun! Leave everything and trust me, I will rescue you from all the problems. Do not worry.”

*Ananyaashchintayato mam ye janaa paryupasate
Tesdaam nityabhiyuktaanaam yogakshemam wahaamyaham*
[The Geeta 9(22)].
*Ananya chetaha satatam yo mam smarati nityasha
Tasyaham sulabha paartha nityayuktasya yogina* [The Geeta 8(14)].

*Sarwa dharmaan parityajya maamekam sharanam wraja
Aham twa sarvapaapebhyo mokshayishyaami maashucha* [The
Geeta 18(66)]

Therapeutic Outcome

Ultimately, all these efforts of Krishna becomes fruitful; Krishna-Upachar is successful. Arjun says: “Oh Lord! My delusion is now dissolved, I received the insight. No doubt that I will carry out my responsibility, and do whatever you direct me to do.”

*Nashto moha smriteerlabhdhwa twatprasaadaan mayaachyuta
Sthitosmi gatasandeha karishye bachanam tava* [The Geeta
18(73)].

Hence, Mahabharat battle is fought; providing grand victory to Arjun and the Pandavs.

Conclusion

“Psychotherapy is the treatment, by psychological means, of the problems of an emotional nature, in which a trained therapist deliberately establishes a professional relationship with the client, with the object of: removing, modifying, or retarding existing symptoms; mediating disturbed patterns of behavior; and promoting positive personality growth and development” (Wolberg & Lewis, R., 1988).

Looking at the above-mentioned modern definition of Psychotherapy, Krishna (the therapist) has done every effort in removing the melancholy (vishaad) of Arjun. Arjun’s disturbed behavioral patterns are well taken care of, and his personality growth has been promoted to develop into the well-adjusted (sthitapragya) state. Hence, these seven hundred stanzas of the Geeta discourse can be well-fitted into the modern version of eclectic form of Psychotherapy.

It can be a useful tool for an experienced therapist, if individualized for a suitable client. However, it requires judicious application and needs to be tailor-made for an individual client with specific problems of distress.

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