

## Environmental Ideology in *Bhagvad Geeta*

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### Abstract

*Modern people have no respect for Nature and they appreciate the development in science and technology which have resulted in environmental crisis. Human greed is causing untold devastation. Bhagawad Geeta offers practical, observable solution to decrease environmental destruction in some extent. The present paper focuses on the verses in the Geeta that describes the environment, human nature, nature centric human attitude etc. In the Geeta, Lord Krishna's preaching suggests solutions to environmental destructions caused by human beings. Geeta offers the effective ways to control greed with practical examples of how to live by sustaining the environment. Bhagwad Geeta persuades the values and mentality of the people to respect the nature. It tries to reduce greed.*

Keywords: environmental crisis, Bhagwad Geeta, environmental destruction, human attitude...

Throughout the world, many environmentalists like Arne Naess, Lynn White, Cheryll Glotfelty, Glen Love, Harold Fromm, Greg Garrad, Aldo Leopald and many more concerned about the current deplorable condition of our planet Earth. The serious environmental problems like the polluted air, the unhygienic drinking water, overexploitation of earth's resources, deforestation, global warming, out of control waste management, extinction of species, ozone depletion are posing threat to human existence. The Christianity has been reluctant to support solutions to environmental issues that call for deep reverence for Nature. Many environmentalist, scientist, politicians have presented solutions to deal with these disasters while some have acknowledged human greed is the root cause of all environmental destruction. Christians believe

in “stewardship” of Nature and instead of taking care, they dominate Nature with unrestricted exploitation. During colonial era, European countries were influenced by Christian thinking. The seeds of exploitation of Nature were sown and cultivated when Europeans were in control of the world. In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, social and political movements responded to greed and injustice. But most of movements were materialistic and based on Marxist thinking haven’t adequately addressed environmental issues. James Gustav Speth, Law Professor and Environmental advocate said,

“I used to think the top environmental problems were biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse and climate change. I thought that with 30 years of good science we could address those problems. But I was wrong. The top environmental problems are selfishness, greed and apathy... and to deal with those we need a spiritual and cultural transformation. And we scientist don’t know how to do that.”

Modern people have no respect for Nature and they appreciate the development in science and technology which have resulted in environmental crisis. Human greed is causing untold devastation. *Bhagawad Geeta* offers practical, observable solution to decrease environmental destruction in some extent. The *Bhagwad Geeta* is one of the holy books in Hindu community. Bhagwad means Bhagwan, the God and Geeta means a song. *Bhagwad Geeta* is narrated by Lord Krishna. It has 700 *shlokas* and has the solution of every problem related with human beings. The researchers studied Geeta with its various angles and emphasized on different topics related to everyday life. The present paper focuses on the verses in the Geeta that describes the environment, human nature, nature centric human attitude etc. In the Geeta, Lord Krishna’s preaching suggests solutions to environmental destructions caused by human beings. Geeta offers the effective ways to control greed with practical examples of how to live by sustaining the environment.

At Kurukshetra, Lord Krishna explained Arjuna the necessity of war in favour of right judgment. Krishna told that he is the creator of the nature and the living things which brought up in the lap of nature. He is the ruler of the universe. He is the governor of birth and death of living organism. In the present paper, focus has been given on the verses of the Geeta related to nature and its relationship with the living. In Chapter Three of the Geeta *Shlok* 10 to 14 and 27 explained the cycle of cloud, rain, food and human behavior to the nature. *Shlok* no 10 and 11 clarifies that the universe was created by Brahma. The *praja* of Brahma that means natural elements and human beings have to live in harmony. Therefore people must live with the feelings of *Yajna*. *Yajna* means the work performed with the motive of selflessness. All the deities in the horizon of *praja* of Brahma that means the Sun, Moon, Air, Water etc. support *Yajna*. The sun illuminates the world constantly without any self interest. The Moon offers

coolness to the whole mankind. The air flows for all without any prejudice. Water and Earth nourishes to all living creatures. All these nature elements are considered as deities and they do their work continuously for all and give inspiration to the human beings to work generously. It is further clarified that people will progress through *Yajna* or generosity. Generosity is competent to start the life towards progress because selfishness and narrow mindedness is the root cause of all the problems.

Lord Shri Krishna emphasized on gratitude in *Shlok* no. 12 and 13. He simplifies that whatever the deities blessed to us for the sake of welfare of all, we should have sense of gratitude for them. For example trees give us fruits so we nourish them through watering and fertilizing. Rivers have important place in the natural wealth. They fulfill the necessities of humans. It is our duty to take care of them. In the modern age, people are constantly deteriorating these deities or natural elements. Constant deterioration of these elements is a serious problem which needs to be redressed immediately. The feeling of selfishness causes imbalance in the Nature. Lord Krishna calls him a thief who uses it for his own gratification. *Shlok* no 13 suggests the ancient Indian culture of serving the food to others and eating afterwards. The fellow citizen is suffering from hunger and we are indulging our senses is not humanity. Human beings intense desire of gratification leads to exploitation of natural resources and creates the problems like insecurity and imbalance which resulted into calamities like global warming, cloud bursting, flood, drought etc. In the same chapter, *Shlok* no 14 represent nature animal relation. Rain generated from cloud and cloud is generated from *Yajna*. Today's offering will be gained in tomorrow. *Yajna* is service to the environment. Animal lives on food crops which require rain. The cycle of nature and living creatures are interdependent. The role of human beings plays vital role for sustaining the environment through their good behavior and benevolence. In *Shlok* no 27, nature is the director of every work. Doing harm to the nature will ultimately affect the regular activities related to human beings and living, nonliving creatures. The present *shlok* is a warning to egotistical people who does not believe in the power of Nature.

Chapter 7 in *Bhagwad Geeta* indicates relationship between living and non living elements in the nature. *Shlok* no 4 focused on *para* and *apara* relation that means human environment relationship. Mind, intelligence, and senses of human beings act as a driving force to keep the environmental elements like, land, water, air and space healthy and strong. The good sense of human beings to the environment holds it and beautiful nature helps the living beings to prosper. *Shlok* no 7 indicates significant relationship of every elements of the nature. It represents omnipresence of God. After the death, everything returned to the superpower and manifest for the next life. Evaluation of the nature is a natural process. Every living being have to change their behavior in order to uphold in the world. *Shlok* 8 and 9 clarified the same thing.

God is present in every form of the environment. He is the coolness of moon, sweetness of water, the atmosphere of earth, heat of fire and vastness of sky.

Chapter 10, *Shlok* no. 26 describes the importance of *Peepal* tree. It is called as *Ashvatha* that means best and *Ichhapurti* means fulfillment of desires. Scientifically, *Peepal* tree provides a lot of oxygen and absorbs polluted gases. *Peepal* leaves are very beneficial in many diseases and drive out poisonous substances from the body. Like *Peepal* tree, *Tulsi* plant has also important place in *Geeta*. *Tulsi* leaves have capacity to destroy the bacteria of fever and cold. It enhances the memory and expel out the poisonous material from the body. It suggests the God's presence in every element, animals, plant and trees etc. Exploitation of these natural elements means causing pain to God itself.

Chapter 13, *Shlok* 19, 20, 21 clarifies individual relation with material nature. Nature is eternal. The individual souls are also eternal. A living person having soul in a body depends on the nature to grow. When the person dies, body merges in the nature but the soul transforms into another body. Nature plays an important role in the lives of living entities. The living beings are responsible for the affliction and pleasure of the world. It means the pleasure or misery in the world depends on the activities of the living creatures. Today's activities of the living beings determine the soul's next birth in superior or inferior womb. Chapter 14, *Shlok* no 3 and 4 also clarify Brahma's existence in *Prakriti* means Nature. Nature is the mother of all living things. The life is created only from the nature.

*Bhagwad Geeta* persuades the values and mentality of the people to respect the nature. It tries to reduce greed. Material consumption and possessions are not important. It focuses on individual practices that will control one's animal temperament and allow one to rise more compassionate, less greedy and generous. *Geeta* describes interdependence of environment and living creatures. It enriches the people to play environment friendly behavior and help to grow environmental values. Lord Krishna enlightens that we are slaves to our body. Our body desires are the cause of greed. Intense desire and greed is fueled by the selfish enjoyment. Selfish enjoyment can be control by the power of love. Love for beautiful nature and its resources, animals may overcome the problem.

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