

Vol II Issue V Nov 2012

Impact Factor : 0.1870

ISSN No :2231-5063

Monthly Multidisciplinary Research Journal

Golden Research Thoughts

Chief Editor
Dr.Tukaram Narayan Shinde

Publisher
Mrs.Laxmi Ashok Yakkaldevi

Associate Editor
Dr.Rajani Dalvi

Honorary
Mr.Ashok Yakkaldevi

IMPACT FACTOR : 0.2105

Welcome to ISRJ

RNI MAHMUL/2011/38595

ISSN No.2230-7850

Indian Streams Research Journal is a multidisciplinary research journal, published monthly in English, Hindi & Marathi Language. All research papers submitted to the journal will be double - blind peer reviewed referred by members of the editorial Board readers will include investigator in universities, research institutes government and industry with research interest in the general subjects.

International Advisory Board

Flávio de São Pedro Filho Federal University of Rondonia, Brazil	Mohammad Hailat Dept. of Mathematical Sciences, University of South Carolina Aiken, Aiken SC 29801	Hasan Baktir English Language and Literature Department, Kayseri
Kamani Perera Regional Centre For Strategic Studies, Sri Lanka	Abdullah Sabbagh Engineering Studies, Sydney	Ghayoor Abbas Chotana Department of Chemistry, Lahore University of Management Sciences [PK]
Janaki Sinnasamy Librarian, University of Malaya [Malaysia]	Catalina Neculai University of Coventry, UK	Anna Maria Constantinovici AL. I. Cuza University, Romania
Romona Mihaila Spiru Haret University, Romania	Ecaterina Patrascu Spiru Haret University, Bucharest	Horia Patrascu Spiru Haret University, Bucharest, Romania
Delia Serbescu Spiru Haret University, Bucharest, Romania	Loredana Bosca Spiru Haret University, Romania	Ilie Pinteau, Spiru Haret University, Romania
Anurag Misra DBS College, Kanpur	Fabricio Moraes de Almeida Federal University of Rondonia, Brazil	Xiaohua Yang PhD, USA
Titus Pop	George - Calin SERITAN Postdoctoral Researcher	Nawab Ali Khan College of Business Administration

Editorial Board

Pratap Vyamktrao Naikwade ASP College Devrukh,Ratnagiri,MS India	Iresh Swami Ex - VC. Solapur University, Solapur	Rajendra Shendge Director, B.C.U.D. Solapur University, Solapur
R. R. Patil Head Geology Department Solapur University, Solapur	N.S. Dhaygude Ex. Prin. Dayanand College, Solapur	R. R. Yaliker Director Managment Institute, Solapur
Rama Bhosale Prin. and Jt. Director Higher Education, Panvel	Narendra Kadu Jt. Director Higher Education, Pune	Umesh Rajderkar Head Humanities & Social Science YCMOU, Nashik
Salve R. N. Department of Sociology, Shivaji University, Kolhapur	K. M. Bhandarkar Praful Patel College of Education, Gondia	S. R. Pandya Head Education Dept. Mumbai University, Mumbai
Govind P. Shinde Bharati Vidyapeeth School of Distance Education Center, Navi Mumbai	Sonal Singh Vikram University, Ujjain	Alka Darshan Shrivastava Shaskiya Snatkottar Mahavidyalaya, Dhar
Chakane Sanjay Dnyaneshwar Arts, Science & Commerce College, Indapur, Pune	G. P. Patankar S. D. M. Degree College, Honavar, Karnataka	Rahul Shriram Sudke Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya, Indore
Awadhesh Kumar Shirotriya Secretary, Play India Play (Trust),Meerut	Maj. S. Bakhtiar Choudhary Director,Hyderabad AP India.	S.KANNAN Ph.D , Annamalai University,TN
	S.Parvathi Devi Ph.D.-University of Allahabad	Satish Kumar Kalhotra
	Sonal Singh	

**Address:-Ashok Yakkaldevi 258/34, Raviwar Peth, Solapur - 413 005 Maharashtra, India
Cell : 9595 359 435, Ph No: 02172372010 Email: ayisrj@yahoo.in Website: www.isrj.net**



MAHATMA GANDHI'S INTERPRETATION OF BHAGWAD GEETA

SHIRISHKUMAR D. PAWAR

Dept. Political Science
Balasaheb Desai College Patan.

Abstract:

Acharya Jawadekar maintained that the Bhagwad Geeta laid down a code of conduct for the guidance of the kings to be followed in the wars. Lord Krishna and Arjun both were Kshatriyas (warrior Castes) and they had Kshatriya ideals to follow. The Geeta told us about the concept of the ideal warrior king and Kshatriya's place and function in the society. Taking Arjun's Kshatriya characteristics and his duties as a warrior prince into account the Geeta espoused its teaching Mamnusara Yuddhschha. Mahatma Gandhi interpreted this axiom of the Geeta to mean "fight non-violently for truth" – and Mahatma Gandhi maintained that this interpretation was in keeping with the teaching of the Geeta. For, though all the wars were ended, the message of the Geeta was that "The war for the truth would always continue and always guide the warriors of truth". Mahatma Gandhi thought this to be the chief message of the Geeta.¹

KEYWORDS:

Interpretation, Teaching, Message, Truth, Violence.

INTRODUCTION :

Though violence and war were inevitable in politics, Mahatma Gandhi poured new meaning and raised politics to the higher level. Explaining Mahatma Gandhi's point of view vis-a-vis the Geeta, Acharya Jawadekar argued that Mahatma Gandhi's point of view was practical and related to life. He imparted new vision to the teachings of the Geeta. There was no use to deny the element of violence in politics. Mahatma Gandhi counselled that if it was inevitable do it with utter selflessness. The founders of religions and sages laid down limitations and instructions regarding it but he wanted to lift our dealings to higher level and did not want to pull down duties to the level of practical life.² It was the most significant principle of the Geeta that the human society must have its foundations on religion. Acharya Jawadekar stated that the people should not carry out their duties in the spirit of self-interest, but they should do it as their duty. This was the meaning of social teachings of the Geeta.³

In the preface to the Anasakti Yoga Mahatma Gandhi wrote that the author of the Bhagwad Geeta himself extended and changed the meaning of great words. Acharya Jawadekar noted that even a casual reading of pages of the Bhagwad Geeta revealed that there was not a trace of the meaning of the word Yadnya to be found in the Geeta, which meant killing of sacrificial beast before the composition of the Geeta. But the Geeta mentioned Japyadnya as the king of the Yadnyas. The third chapter of the Geeta suggested that Yadnya was the use of the body for the benefit of others. The third and the fourth chapters of the Bhagwad Geeta lent themselves to other definitions of Yadnya, but none of them expressed or implied killing of the sacrificial beast. The same was the case with regard to the meaning of the word Sanyas or renunciation of all activity of life. The ascetic of the Geeta did not accept the conventional meaning of the word that he should renounce all activities of life. The ascetic of the Geeta was Yatikarmi, i.e., performing the duties of a Sanyasi, but he was Ati Akarmi too (totally inactive.) Mahatma Gandhi maintained that thus

the author of the Geeta extended the original meaning of these great terms and taught us to extend the meanings of the whole gammut of the language.

Why did Mahatma Gandhi interpret the meaning of the word Yuddha not as an armed war but as a Satyagraha Yuddha, a non-violent struggle for the establishment of truth? Acharya Jawadekar argued that in Mahatma Gandhi's preface to the Anasakti Yoga he wrote :

The author of the Geeta might tell us that the person who performed selfless action could fight the war and we can derive the same meaning from certain passages of the Geeta but after completely following the teachings of the Geeta in my life. I may hasten to add that unless we pursue truth and non-violence we cannot perform action in the spirit of detachment.

It was very significant that Mahatma Gandhi pitched his personal experience or the authority of the self experience against the authority of the word of the Geeta. The Geeta of the authority of the personal experience was different from the language of the other commentaries on the Geeta. It was gentler and humble but it was burnished in revolutionary self-experience of the man of action. Acharya Jawadekar maintained that Mahatma Gandhi was the first after Gautam the Buddha, to initiate the test of the authority of self-experience to an authoritative work like the Geeta and extended the meaning of its words and enriched it. Jawadekar thought that it was a unique achievement of Mahatma Gandhi.⁴

Acharya Jawadekar held that the Geeta taught us to perform our duties in the spirit of detachment and by maintaining equanimity of mind. Modern ethics should accept the teaching of the Geeta that man could really act conscientiously when he controlled his senses. The message of the Geeta was inner purification of mind and intelligence. The terms Sthitpradnya (one who had attained the state of equanimity), Brahmasthiti (the state of attaining the Brahman), and Brahmanirvana (attaining the state of spiritual salvation) all meant the same thing. Mahatma Gandhi tried to tell the modern rationalists importance of that principle of equanimity of the intellect and exhorted them to attain it.⁵

The Bhagwad Geeta accepted the spiritual theism and the theory of incarnations of God. And Mahatma Gandhi admitted that he accepted both. But Acharya Jawadekar, however, confessed that both his heart and intellect rejected them. He regarded them as poetic imagination. The acharya further stated that his intellect accepted this and admitted that his heart could also experience it. But he clarified that self-realization was the peculiar experience of man of character. He recognised that his self-experience entailed him to regard whole world as the extension of self and inspired him to perform moral duties in the cause of society. He held that the position was morally elevating because man was sacrificing his self interest for the benefit of society. Acharya Jawadekar maintained that the Geeta and Mahatma Gandhi held that morality should be based on spiritualization and the concepts of equanimity of mind and salvation reinforced the former. He thought that this was important and valuable.⁶

MAHATMA GANDHI'S INTERPRETATION OF THE WAR :-

All discussion of war in the Geeta was based on the assumption that war was inevitable and it had relative usefulness. Acharya Jawadekar noted that there was real need of the people who could present a non-violent alternative to war and who had the ability to generate spiritual strength to follow that ideal.⁷

Lord Krishna told Arjun that he would lose his salvation if he tried to evade war and that he should fight for this own salvation. Acharya Jawadekar remarked that Mahatma Gandhi, too, was fighter for salvation. But his goal of salvation had the political implication.⁸

The Geeta exhorted Arjun to disinterestedly fight his war. The Geeta used the Bharatiya (Maha Bharat) War as an illustration. The Geeta spiritually prepared Arjun for war. But war today had become multifaceted, complex and could be dealt with in various ways. Mahatma Gandhi used words like "I revolt, I fight". But he invested them with new meanings. Acharya Jawadekar explained that Mahatma Gandhi had declared that he was going to change the prevailing meanings of the words and added that he had learned to invest great familiar words with new meanings from the Bhagwad Geeta. The Bhagwad Geeta changed the established meaning of the word Yadnya which had Vedic connotation. Attainment of knowledge, salvation were familiar words but the new meaning could be poured into it. He said that the war was fighting. If injustice was being done to us, we have to fight against it; but not with arms. Resistance was the chief element in the word 'war'. 'Resistance to protect your rights' was true meaning of the word. If a new way of resistance was discovered, it would still be a war and there was no fear of injustice on either side. Lord Krishna changed the meaning of the word. Mahatma Gandhi said that he changed the meaning of war. This non-violent war would achieve more good than a violent war. The seekers after salvation and truth fought their wars in the spirit of equanimity. Acharya Jawadekar stated that Mahatma Gandhi gave spiritual meaning to war and in turn accorded a new meaning to spiritualism.⁹

The laws of religion were not forever true and permanent; they were relative and changed with time and authority. They ought to be so changed. Mahatma Gandhi accepted the mutability of time and

viewed the Geeta's advice to Arjun from that point of view and pointed out that what was right for one might be forbidden to others. Thus, the consideration of right and wrong might be elusive but vested interest was always wrong, but detachment (Anasakti) was always right. Thus, Mahatma Gandhi's interpretation of the Geeta went beyond the relative values.

It was possible to fight a material war disinterestedly thousands of years ago under the name of religious war. But today moral and intellectual advancements had become a must for the society along with the advancement of human culture, and on that basis the Geeta could be considered as a work that justified war. With the advancement of the human society the man who had achieved stability of mind also got developed. Mahatma Gandhi developed this basic thought which might go against the literal meaning of the words of the Geeta, but he tested it on the authority of self-experience. Archarya Jawadekar thought that though the ancient sages professed that they could fight dispassionately and disinterestedly, the modern sages could maintain that they were unable to do so. Jawadekar thought that this difference in their perceptions was the result of progress of mankind with the passage of time.¹⁰

The Satyagraha Philosophy had a more prominent place for struggle against injustice than in philosophy of Lord Krishna. Satyagraha was the method of resistance against unjust person. It was an instrument of resistance. If one did not have the moral and spiritual strength to wield that weapon, the more alternative in that case was to be non-resistant like Arjun in the Mahabharat war, and suffer injustice and ignominy, or to take up arms against the injustice. Mahatma Gandhi preferred the second alternative. He always exhorted people never to submit meekly to a tyrant, never brook injustice.¹¹

ANASAKTIYOG

The principal tenet of the Anasakti Yog was how to practice truth in everyday life. To illustrate that tenet Acharya Jawadekar referred to the Geeta. Yogeshwar Krishna was an embodiment of complete knowledge, and Arjun epitomised attempt of the man to commensurate action with that complete knowledge. Arjun's struggle to realize the absolute in the heart was a creative man's struggle. Acharya Jawadekar maintained that when knowledge of Supreme Being and concomitant action went hand in hand, the glory and true morality were sure to be found. The Acharya thought that Mahatma Gandhi's Anasakti Yog (performance of action in the spirit of detachment) was a ceaselessly going on experiment, life was its laboratory. One could never presume that complete purification of thought and feeling was attained. One had to be always alert and to do what one thought right at the time. One had to be vigilant all the time.¹²

Mahatma Gandhi held that devotion to truth was the only way of attainment of divine and universal beneficence. He believed that one should follow the teachings of the saints that truth was religion and truth was God and perform his action in the spirit of detachment. One who pursued truth in the spirit of detachment did never turn his back on life but would always try to perform his duties in life with devotion to truth. Ahimsa was the only means of removing injustice in society and to establish society on the basis of truth and non-violence were interdependent. Mahatma Gandhi believed that truth was the end of life and non-violence was the means to achieve it. For him this was as science of social development as well as self development.¹³

Acharya Jawadekar opined that the man should be taught to shed all his desires (Wasana) and his expectations for a reward (Phala) if he wanted to perform action in the spirit of detachment; he should make conscious efforts to vanquish all desires and gratifications. Explaining how the purity of means and selfless action were mutually interdependent, Acharya Jawadekar stated that giving up desire for reward helped one to understand the purity of the means. Why did one use unfair means? Because he was extremely impatient for the reward. A person actuated by desire lost his sense of right and wrong, fair and foul means. He sought the gratification of his desires. For that purpose he would willingly use despicable means to attain it. One had to realise that no good ends could be achieved by vile means. His desire for gratification turned him into a beast and reason and understanding foresook him. Man should pursue his duties without nursing a desire for rewards and gratification of desires. Not that he would not attain his gratification or reward. He would certainly get his reward. Replying to those who argued that one who practised Karmayoga selflessly, would never attain his reward; Acharya Jawadekar stated that there was no room to draw such conclusion from the Geeta. The karmayogi performed his duties for the sake of welfare of the society.

Explaining how pure means made man disinterested in rewards, Acharya Jawadekar observed that having stabilized the intellect he should become one with his means. Rely upon it and engage in the pursuit and have faith in your efforts which would, after all, be rewarded. Never adopt unfair means. Be disinterested and violence would not stand. Violence was committed when attachment to worldly rewards dominated. The spirit of detachment discouraged violence.¹⁴

Democracy and people's politics were on the rise. While old states were wiped out by

advancement of material sciences, emergence of one world government appeared a distinct possibility. The weapons of destruction and economic dependence had unimaginably developed and war had become very destructive. Acharya Jawadekar believed that in these difficult times, Gandhism was trying to give the message of Anasakti Yoga (disinterested action.)

SATYAGRAHI TEACHINGS OF THE GEETA

Mahatma Gandhi stated in the Nava Jeevan of 16 April 1923 that he could not have helped launching that war while emulating the Geeta. To him it was a crusade. Acharya Jawadekar quoted this passage in his translation of Mahatma Gandhi's Anasakti Yoga. Mahatma Gandhi counselled the Satyagrahi's to get identified with the Supreme Being and fight against injustice in the world. He held that unity of individual and Supreme Being and fighting injustice in the world was the message of the Geeta to the world.

Violent war could not be fought if you identify yourself with the God. Gandhi held that violent and destructive war and peace could not be reconciled. He believed that the goal of resistance could not be accomplished without non-violent Satyagrahi war, keeping implicit, firm faith in truth, realized through self-experience which was necessary for welfare of society. Mahatma Gandhi had declared Satyagrahi non-violent war against the British Raj in India and launched the Dandi March to break Salt law. Mahatma Gandhi held that Satyagraha was crusade and he took inspiration from the Geeta to launch it.¹⁵

The Bhagwad Geeta was composed as a motivating force to inspire a crusade and Satyagraha was a crusade. Acharya Jawadekar believed that Mahatma Gandhi had given a new meaning to the teachings of the Geeta. He tried to make contribution to the word used by Bhagwan Krishna. Dharma Yuddha really meant a violent armed war. But it was from the Geeta that he was inspired to find out a non-violent alternative to destructive warfare. Acharya Jawadekar maintained that the need for a non-violent alternative to war had always been felt. Mahatma Gandhi found it and the attention of entire world was drawn to India's struggle for Independence.¹⁶

- 1) Jawadekar, S. D. – *Adhunik Bharat*, P. 2425
- 2) Jawadekar, S. D. – *Gandhidarshan*, P. 2,3
- 3) Jawadekar, S. D. – *Bhagwadgeeta Kay Ahe Ani Kay Nahi*, P. 3
- 4) Jawadekar, S. D. – *Gandhiwad*, P. 2
- 5) Jawadekar, S. D. – *M. K. Gandhi And Bhagwadgeeta*, NavBharat, Oct 1952, P. 7
- 6) Ibid – P. 6
- 7) Ibid – P. 7
- 8) Ibid – P.7
- 9) Jawadekar, S. D. – *Gandhidarshan*, P. 7
- 10) Jawadekar, S. D. – *M. K. Gandhi And Bhagwadgeeta*, NavBharat, Oct 1952, P. 5,6
- 11) Ibid – P. 4, 5
- 12) Jawadekar, S. D. – *Gandhi Jeevan Rahasya*, P. 87
- 13) Jawadekar, S. D. – *Gandhiwad*, P. 23
- 14) Jawadekar, S. D. – *Gandhidarshan*, P. 101
- 15) Jawadekar, S. D. – *M. K. Gandhi And Bhagwadgeeta*, NavBharat, Oct 1952, P. 35
- 16) Ibid – P. 1, 2

Publish Research Article International Level Multidisciplinary Research Journal For All Subjects

Dear Sir/Mam,

We invite unpublished research paper.Summary of Research Project,Theses,Books and Books Review of publication,you will be pleased to know that our journals are

Associated and Indexed,India

- * International Scientific Journal Consortium Scientific
- * OPEN J-GATE

Associated and Indexed,USA

- EBSCO
- Index Copernicus
- Publication Index
- Academic Journal Database
- Contemporary Research Index
- Academic Paper Databse
- Digital Journals Database
- Current Index to Scholarly Journals
- Elite Scientific Journal Archive
- Directory Of Academic Resources
- Scholar Journal Index
- Recent Science Index
- Scientific Resources Database

Golden Research Thoughts
258/34 Raviwar Peth Solapur-413005,Maharashtra
Contact-9595359435
E-Mail-ayisrj@yahoo.in/ayisrj2011@gmail.com
Website : www.isrj.net