

The Shrimad Bhagavad Gita and the Management of Psychodermatological Distress

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ABSTRACT

"Epidermis" is the outer part of the body and "Endodermis" is the inner part of the body. These are the base of mental state and all of them are interconnected with each other. Just like Arjuna was in a state of anxiety and depression on the battlefield, in skin patients too, excessive thoughts create mental confusion. Just like in the Bhagavad Gita, where Krishna ji helped the Arjuna through dialogue and discussion, similarly, to solve the anxiety and depression arising from skin diseases like psoriasis, vitiligo etc., the focus will be on the treatment process described in the Bhagavad Gita i.e. counselling

Keywords: Counselling, Shrimad Bhagavad Gita, Psychotherapy

1. INTRODUCTION

"*Tatraikam Sparnendriyamindriyanamindriyavyapak, Chetah Samvaayi*".¹ Of the Five senses, the sense of touch is in contact with all the other four senses- (*Rasanendriya, Chakshuindriya, Ghraanindriya, shravanendriya.*) because the skin is present throughout the body. It is said that the skin is connected to the mind. Thus, if there is any deformity (undesirable change) in the skin, it has a direct impact on the mind - because physical form of mind is the body and subtle form of the body is mind. There is a direct connection with the mind. If the skin of the body is safe then there is a "positive" effect on it and if there is any deformity in it then the negative effect is automatically visible on the mind, which gives rise to mental diseases like anxiety and depression.

Like other organs, the skin is an important organ composed of specialized types of cells. Skin diseases are the external manifestations of illness in various organs within the body.² In *yoga* therapy, two important reasons for its appearance are- disturbance in the digestive system and transport of contaminated blood in the blood circulation. According to *Ayurveda*, the different layers of the skin are described by different names, all *dhatu*s are related to the skin and the wastes of these *Dhatu*s are excreted through the skin.³ When treating skin diseases, it is equally important to address the emotional entanglements and blockages that lie at the root of the disease. When treating skin diseases, removing the emotional conflicts and blockages that lie at the root of the disease is as important as other treatments. The changing mindset associated with skin diseases can trigger mental illnesses like anxiety and depression, further aggravating the symptoms. The teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita* improve the situation by giving proper direction to this changing negative thinking. The *Bhagavad Gita* is essentially the essence of the entire *Vedic* scriptures. It is a teaching given by *Krishna ji* to *Arjuna* (a warrior), just before the start of the *Mahabharata* war, to free him from anxiety and depression. It is part of the "*Bhishma Parva*" of the *Mahabharata*. It consists of eighteen chapters and seven hundred verses.⁴ A fierce battle took place between the *Kauravas* and the *Pandavas* in *Kurukshetra*. The real meaning of *Kurukshetra* is *Kuru*, meaning "*Kar*." Instead of sitting idle, the field of "*Karma*" in life is . On one side, the warrior *Duryodhana* and his ninety-nine brothers stand ready for battle, and on the other, *Dharmaraja Yudhishtira* and his four brothers. Upon proper understanding, we realize that there are hundreds of problems in our lives, and the means to resolve them are only five, the five senses. Whether physical or mental, illness arises only when there is an imbalance in these five senses. Here, *Krishna* addresses *Arjuna's* problems through the teachings of the *Gita*. It would not be an exaggeration to call him the world's first psychiatric counselor. *Arjuna's* personality is among the great warriors, victorious in numerous battles, the best archer of his time, and a renowned prince. But here, he says to *Krishna*,

kārpaṇya-doṣopahata-svabhāvaḥ

pr̥cchāmi tvāṁ dharma-sammūḍha-cetāḥ

yac chreyaḥ syān niścitaṁ brūhi tan me

śiṣyas te 'haṁ śādhi mām tvāṁ prapannam. BG.2.7

My behavior has become cowardly and confused because of attachment but now teach me to behave correctly in accordance with my conduct. Please be my *Guru* and make me your disciple and remove all my troubles.⁵

Required Materials:

Using the Hamilton Depression Rating Scale to assess anxiety and depression associated with skin disease.⁶ Arjuna's mood resembles some sequence of this depression measuring scale, outlined as follows. There is similarity in the symptoms of anxiety and depression in variables 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 10, 11, 15, 17 of the Hamilton Depression Rating Scale and verses 29, 30, 32, 45, 46 of Chapter 1 and verse 7 of Chapter 2 of the *Bhagavad Gita*.

Medical Procedure:

Chart:

Symptoms of anxiety and depression	Psychotherapy (Counselling)
Chapter 1, verses 29	Chapter 2, verses 03
Chapter 1, verses 30	Chapter 2, verses 11
Chapter 1, verses 32	Chapter 2, verses 14
Chapter 1, verses 45	Chapter 2, verses 21
Chapter 1, verses 46	Chapter 2, verses 31
	Chapter 2, verses 47
	Chapter 6, verses 13
	Chapter 6, verses 35

Symptoms of anxiety:

vepathuś ca śarīre me

roma-harṣaś ca jāyate

gāṇḍīvaṃ sraṃsate hastāt

tvak caiva paridahyate. BG.1.29

na ca śaknomy avasthātum

bhramatīva ca me manaḥ

nimittāni ca paśyāmi

vīparītāni keśava. BG.1.30

-Dry mouth,

-Body tremors,

-Goosebumps,

-Weakness of limbs,

-Skin irritation,

-Dizziness,

-Confusion of mind.⁷⁻⁸

Symptom of depression :

1.Negative thoughts :

na kāṅkṣhe vijayaṃ kṛiṣhṇa na cha rājyaṃ sukhāni cha BG.1.32

I neither want victory nor the pleasure of the kingdom.

- No desire to win,

- Not a will to rule the kingdom,

- No desire for pleasures.⁹

2.Guilt perception:

yad rājya-sukha-lobhena hantum sva-janam udyatāḥ BG. 1.45

They are rising up to kill their relatives for the sake of kingdom and pleasure.

-Killing your own family members,

-To consider war as a sin.¹⁰

3. Desire to die:

dhārtarāśhṭrā raṇe hanyus tan me kṣhemataram bhavet BG. 1.46

If Dhritarashtra's sons kill me in battle, even that death will be more beneficial for me.

- Consider it beneficial to be killed by the enemy.¹¹

Medical Consultation:

1. Confidence Building-

klaibyaṃ mā sma gamaḥ pārtha

naitat tvayy upapadyate

kṣudraṃ hṛdaya-daurbalyaṃ

tyaktvottiṣṭha paran-tapa. BG 2.3

Krishna tells Arjuna that it is not befitting for a warrior to behave like a eunuch. Fighting on the battlefield is his duty. Do not be weak-hearted.¹² Both the brave and the coward feel fear, but of these two, the one who faces the situation boldly is the brave; the coward runs away in fear. Therefore, remove the veil of weakness from your mind and rise up for battle.

2. Developing Positive Thinking-

śhrī bhagavān uvācha

aśhochyān-anvaśhochas-tvaṃ prajñā-vādānś cha bhāṣhase

gatāsūn-agaṭāsūnś-cha nānuśhochanti paṇḍitāḥ BG. 2.11

What is meant by worrying issues? Why worry about perishable things and talk like a wise man, which is a contradiction.¹³ Here are three things to understand: 1. Thoughtlessness. 2. think too much 3. *Nirvichar*.

Thoughtlessness - Duryodhana and his 99 brothers and all the sons of *pandu* except *Arjuna* are in the state of thoughtlessness, which is right for the war. A warrior's religion is to defeat his opponent, what justification here for overthinking? which is also seen in the other warriors besides *Arjuna*.

Think too much-Excessive thinking is the root of anxiety and depression. Excessive thinking also proves the futility of thought, leading to anxiety and depression. This is Arjuna's state at this time.

Nirvichar - *Yogeshwar Krishna* is in a state of "*Nirvichar*". He has realized the reality of subtle matter and has forgotten it, a state beyond all thoughts. Only those who are above these can show the right path to both the thoughtless and the excessively thoughtful.

3. Relieving Anxiety-

mātrā-sparśhās tu kaunteya śhītośhṇa-sukha-duḥkha-dāḥ

āgamāpāyino 'nityās tāns-titikṣhasva bhārata BG. 2.14

The inert objects of the senses give pleasure and pain through cold (favorable) and heat (unfavorable). Endure the inert matter that which comes and goes and is impermanent.¹⁴

The point to be understood here is that humans get stuck when happiness arrives and get lost when sorrow arrives. Life is like a wheel, in which today sorrow is visible and tomorrow happiness will be visible. The wheel of life is constantly moving, in which happiness and sorrow keep coming and going. Sorrow is also temporary, and happiness is also temporary. Why dwell in worry and depression by thinking about the future and the past? Therefore, living in the present is meaningful.

4. Develop Tolerance-

vedāvināśhinam nityam ya enam ajam avyayam

katham sa puruṣhaḥ pārtha kam ghātayati hanti kam BG. 2.21

How does one who believes this soul to be indestructible, eternal, unborn and inexhaustible, gets someone killed, and how does he kill someone?¹⁵ This verse said to get out of guilt is very important-because "According to the code of justice, the judge cannot be convicted when a criminal is executed. Even if the king executes the murderer, the king is unaffected by the death penalty because according to the judicial code there is a provision to punish the guilty. Therefore:

swa-dharmam api chāveḥkṣhya na vikampitum arhasi

dharmyāddhi yuddhāch chhreyo 'nyat kṣhatriyasya na vidyate BG. 2.31

There is no other welfare duty for a warrior than righteous warfare.¹⁶

5. Getting rid of guilt-

karmany-evādhikāras te mā phaleṣhu kadāchana

mā karma-phala-hetur bhūr mā te saṅgo 'stvakarmaṇi BG. 2.47

"That is, have authority only in performing your actions, not in the results. Do not think about the consequences of your actions, and do not even think about not doing your actions."¹⁷ The war had not even begun, and *Kunti's* son, *Arjuna*, considered it appropriate to die at the hands of the enemy. Forgetting everything about the task he had come to perform, he was instead thinking about inaction, death, and so on. The current scenario is similar. Despair among people with skin diseases increases to such an extent that they even contemplate and commit suicide. But this is not a solution. We must always remember that "the moment a problem is born, the solution is also born." In reality, we fail to recognize this and end up doing wrong things. Therefore, we must perform our work with devotion. Excessive expectations also cause suffering, and laziness should also be avoided.

6. Concentration of the Mind –

samaṁ kāya-śhiro-grīvaṁ dhārayann achalaṁ sthiraḥ

samprekṣhya nāsikāgraṁ svaṁ diśhaṣh chānavalokayan BG. 6.13

That is, keeping the body, neck and head in one line and not looking in any other direction, look at the tip of your nose with both eyes simultaneously.¹⁸

abhyāsenā tu kaunteya vairāgyeṇa cha grihyate BG.6.35

That is, the mind is controlled through practice and asceticism.¹⁹

Medical Results:

naṣṭo mohaḥ smṛitir labdhā tvat-prasādān mayāchyuta

sthito 'smi gata-sandehaḥ kariṣhye vachanam tava BG.18.73

Arjuna says: O *Achyut!* By Your grace my delusion has been destroyed and I have attained memory. Now I am standing without doubt, so I will obey Your command.⁵ Here *Arjuna* is now talking about being free from anxiety and depression, which has been the ultimate goal of therapy.

2. CONCLUSION:

Just as projectors in cinemas are located at the back, but their reflection is reflected on the front screen. Similarly, our thoughts are the real projectors; a film is created on our bodies based on our thoughts. The sun travels 186,000 miles in a second, but the speed of the mind is unpredictable. Psychologists say that a person has approximately 60,000 thoughts in 24 hours, and 95-98 percent of these thoughts are repeated. Whether a skin patient or a normal person, they should stop thinking too much about the future, because the seed of too much hope yields the fruit of despair. Thus, all the above points are referenced in the *Bhagavad Gita*. In the modern age, it should not only be adopted as a religious text but also as the most appropriate medicine for psychiatric consultation, and should be used in life. Therefore, it is possible to manage anxiety and depression caused by skin disease through the *Bhagavad Gita*.

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