

Philosophy and Critical Thinking
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Week- 07
Lecture 31: Indian Philosophy

Welcome in lecture 31. In this week, we are discussing Indian philosophy or in Indian philosophy, there are many texts and we are trying to understand the basic philosophy of different texts. So, last class we have discussed the philosophy of Upanishad. Today, we are going to talk about Bhagavad Gita. From philosophical point of view, the Bhagavad Gita is a very important text and in this text is talked about many different concepts which is a source material of many philosophies in Indian school of thought and therefore, Bhagavad Gita is a very important text. However, it will be very difficult to discuss Bhagavad Gita's topic, all the topic in one class. So, today I am going to discuss very few concepts of Bhagavad Gita. As I said, it is the most popular and authoritative work and has several commentaries written by the Vedanta school, different school. The many philosophers from Vedanta philosophy, for example, Shankaracharya, Ramanujacharya, have written commentary on this text. Idea is, I just talking about the Sankaracharya, Ramanujacharya because these philosophers are the part of this course. But this Bhagavad Gita is not only for the Vedanta, there are many other schools of thought in Indian school, they have used this Bhagavad Gita as a source material or for them this text is in a reference point. In this text, the God is the supreme and perfect person and he is Para Brahman, the holy, eternal and divine person. In the last class, we have talked about that Para and Apara Brahman, the infinite and finite God. Now, Bhagavad Gita arguing that God is the supreme and perfect person. Bhagavad Gita talks about the Para Brahman, which is a holy, eternal, and divine person, and this is perfect; perfect only means that there is an, he is perfect in all senses. So, while discussing about, if you want to understand this idea from western philosophy, in western philosophy when we are discussing about the Spinoza and the Aristotle, they also talked about a perfect being. So, when we are using this word called perfect, it only means that nothing is lacking. So, there is a perfect thing, this perfect being. Now, we have discussed that about eternal when we are saying that it means that there is a no start and there is no end. So, in that way, God is eternal. He is the self-luminous and trans-empirical spirit. He is transcendent and eminent in relation to the world, and he is the supreme destiny of man and the ultimate goal of humanity. In Indian system, as we have discussed many times in the last two, three classes that the goal of humanity is what to achieve the state, the liberation. So, the God is the ultimate goal of us, ultimate goal of the humanity. So, Bhagavad Gita says that this God and we will be discussing in the next slide that how he has even talked about the different path of to achieve the state. Now, God is the efficient cause of this world. Prakriti is the material cause of this universe and it is

modified into the world under the guidance of God who is efficient cause. So, God is the efficient cause and Prakriti is what is material cause and this world is a modification of this Prakriti. Now, if you ask me what is Prakriti, then Prakriti is, we will be discussing about the Prakriti. So, there are two kinds of Prakriti which is mentioned in Bhagavad Gita. One is lower Prakriti and then higher Prakriti and this lower Prakriti and higher Prakriti are the powers of God. Lower Prakriti composed of earth, water, light, air, ether, manas and buddhi which is the material cause and higher Prakriti which is sustained the finite embodied souls. Maya is the, again he talked about the concept of Maya and according to Bhagavad Gita, Maya is the real power of God and product of Prakriti. Prakriti and Purus both are eternal. If you see the, this slide where it talked about that the lower Prakriti and higher Prakriti are the power of God. So, God is eternal. So therefore, the power of God also is eternal. In that way, they have argued that Prakriti and Puruṣa both are eternal. About the soul, the soul is unborn. So, there is an unborn, it only means that there is no beginning and immortal and immaterial spirit. So, if you can recall the idea of body and soul where we have said that body is material, we can locate in the space and the soul is something which is immaterial and soul is different from the body and soul is eternal. Eternal is there is a no starting point and there is no end point. And so that way the soul is immaterial and immortal. Now the Satva, Rajas and Tamas are product of Prakriti and basic springs of action. This is a very important point where they talked about the different set of actions in terms of Satva, Rajas and Tamas. The three gunas are very important and it causes a different set of actions. Emotion and passion are modification of these three gunas. So, three gunas is what is in a cause of this emotion and passion and these are the main cause of the set of actions. So, it depends on the person's svabhava, how the person is performing the set of action. So, the idea of Satva, Rajas and Tamas is very significant in that way. I is an empirical ego, and Atman is the transcendental ego. Now the sense organ is controlled by mind and the mind is controlled by intellect and intellect is controlled by self. Again, the Gita accepts the freedom of will. The freedom of will is your will is free and this point is important to talk about the responsibility or action and its impression of action. If will is not free then we cannot talk about the action and its responsibility. Gita is accepting what, this freedom of will and therefore the human is free to perform an action according to their svabhava. Now this will is important in the sense that if the will is free then only we can talk about the right set of action and the wrong set of action. So, Bhagavad Gita accepts that freedom of will and we have discussed well in detail about what is freedom of will in our first few classes. As we discussed, the Satva, Rajas, and Tamas are products of Prakriti, and here in this slide, you will get a detailed idea about how this Gunas and what are the effect of this Gunas. So, the argument is a Satva is a pure, transparent and free from pain. It manifests objects, it produces knowledge and pleasure in finite source and binds them to the world through them. Rajas is of the nature of attachment. It produces action in the finite source and binds them to the world through it. It is the causes of desire and anger. Tamas springs form in ignorance, deludes all finite source, produces carelessness, laziness and slip in them

and binds them to the world. Basically, these three Gunas are important and depend on the Gunas and what kind of Gunas are dominating your performing set of action. And Bhagavad Gita also talks about the purification of the mind. So, when you can prefer your mind, you also can improve your set of actions. You are able to perform the right set of actions. Now this is how he argued that if a person who has translated the three Gunas is not and is not moved by them and remain an indifferent spectator of their function, he has become devoid of positive and negative actions. So, I think we have already discussed the law of karma and the law of karma is very important for the Indian system. All school of thought in the Indian system except few, for example Charvaka has accepted the law of karma. Now the very basic question is how to get rid of the problem. So, I will explain you this one the law of karma. Law of karma is suppose, there is an X and he is performed action so the impression of this action is accumulating in where somewhere right and whatever you are getting now that you are getting from this tank. So, this tank is what full of your impression of your past Gunas. Now if you realize that this is how the karma matrix works that if you are going to perform a bad action, you would be facing the impression of the bad action and since you got this idea you started performing always a good action. Even you are going to do that then you have to face the reaction or impression of your good Gunas. Now the question arises that how to get rid of this problem, how to achieve the state of liberation.

Now Bhagavad Gita plays a very important role in the sense that they talks about the three different paths. If you see this point, he argued that if you are able to transcend these three Gunas and is not moved by them and remain indifferent from their function then you become devoid of positive action and negative action. Prakriti is the cause of pleasure and pain it produces. God is the ground of the finite soul and which cannot exist apart from him right. Now there is a very important saying in Bhagavad Gita that whenever there is a decrease of righteousness with triumph of unrighteousness, he incarnates in the human body right. So, he always comes when there is always a triumph of unrighteousness, right? So, this is what he talked about in Bhagavad Gita. Now as I have been I was discussing about the law of karma and it is a very important part of Bhagavad Gita which I would like to discuss in this class because the many philosophers have talked about this theory. So, there are three different path is called a karma yoga, bhakti yoga and the jnana yoga. So, there are three yoga and also, they have talked about the ethics of this text. We will be discussing the ethics from this different point of view. Now first one is path of action. Now, if you see the action, the karma theory, you find there is an action and there is a reaction of an action or an impression of an action. So, we are in this world, or if we are in this problem, let us say, or the cycle of birth and rebirth because of the set of actions which you are performing. Now this set of actions is performing with lot of desires as we have discussed in the last class that how desire is a main cause of our problem of this bhava chakra or the cycle of the birth and rebirth. So how to perform? The Bhagavad Gita never said that you should not perform any action because Bhagavad Gita always talks about the action, Karma

yoga. Karma yoga is a very important part. Now the question arises that how to perform the action. So Bhagavad Gita talks about the egoist desires should be conquered and one who renounces all the selfish desire should be conquered. So, the egoist desires should be conquered and says that when we are performing any action we are not going for this egoism. We are not desiring something of this action. We will be discussing that what does it mean when we are saying that egoist desires should be conquered. As I said that Gita ethics is ethics of activism where it talks about the action. Now what Bhagavad Gita says that all action should be performed in service to God. So, when we are performing any action as a service to God then this is how we can achieve the liberation. And that is the reason that he says that whenever you are performing an action you performing as an because you are doing the service to God. And this is what he talked about the ethics of Niskama karma. We have this idea of Niskama karma is very close to the Kantian idea of duty for duty's sake where we have talked about the end and means. So, suppose there is an action X and we are performing this action for some end. So, there is a desire of this end. So, with this desire what we are doing we are performing this action X. Now the desire is for what? For the self-interest to maximize the self-pleasure so on. Now what Bhagavad Gita is saying let us talk about the means, not the end. Do this your duty, duty for duty's sake as the Kant says. So, it takes is that you performing duty is in everything. Now you are performing with duty without any desire. Desire in the sense that without any desire one is saying he is talking about the ego is desire. So, without thinking of this result what you are doing you are performing action. However, this ethics of Niskama karma is different from the Kantian idea of duty for duty's sake. Bhagavad Gita believes that the attainment of God as the highest good. So, when our performing an action is our final goal is what, to achieve state, attainment of God. In Indian philosophy in this class, we will be discussing about the overall overview of an Indian philosophy where we will be discussing that how the Indian philosophy concentrate or gives an importance to achieving the liberation. Bhagavad Gita has an argument that the attainment of God is a highest good. So, your set of action is goal is worth is attainment of this God. Again, the saastra as the source of the right and wrong action because these are the command of God. So, the God has written has prescribed a set of actions what set of action is right and what set of action is not right and so on. So, the sources of this right and wrong action are in a mention. However, we will be discussing that how the set of action is right and when we will start discussing many of the philosophers, for example Advait-Vedant and Vishistadvaitvada and so on. But for the now for time being, you just take it in this way that our source of this information about the right and wrong as we have discussed in the last class it is about the text the sastras. When we are talking about this world as we discussed in the last class that the text is the way it is going to reveal the reality which is not possible to know through other source of knowledge for example inference for example perception, for example comparison, testimony, and so on and therefore, Vidya is the right source of knowledge source of what so ultimate reality. So, when they are like saying that they are also talking

about what set of action one should perform and what set of action one should not perform right because the highest goal is attainment of God. Gita enjoys the performance of duties for the welfare of humanity right. So, in the last slide we have discussed that how Bhagavad Gita is asking to not go for the egoist desire but let us say they are replacing this idea from the altruistic behavior right. Altruistic egoism and altruism we have discussed the egoism is always thinking of self-interest or maximizing a self-pleasure however then altruism we focused and give importance to the other's pleasure right. So, we maximize others pleasure. Gita is what is asking we going doing for the duties for the welfare of the humanity, the Lok Sangrah. The idea of Lok Sangrah is a very significant in Bhagavad Gita and then even the application of this idea in many different areas in business settings and this is now this is a very important topic right. However, you take it in this class in a way that Bhagavad Gita has talked about that you have to remove this egoist desire and you have to always go for the altruistic behavior right and if you are not able to understand this egoism and altruism you also take it in this way that duties for the welfare of the humanity. So, what we are doing we are performing an action but first performing as a service to God and second, we also think of the welfare of humanity and this set of action will lead you to where to liberation. This set of action this the way the Bhagavad Gita has recommended this way you can achieve the liberation.

Now next path is Bhakti Yoga. Now devotion is and it is in a single minded and unsavory devotion to God. So, devotion is undivided love for God and untended by any selfish motive. So, loving a God is an important but the same time this is a single minded. You are always thinking of the God. God is easily accessible to one who constantly thinks of him, surrenders himself completely to him, takes shelter in him and gives up his whole being into him right. So, this is what a devotion and through this idea I mean if when you are going to love this God I mean when you are single minded and you have single minded devotion to God you are going to offer everything to God right. So, surrendering everything means you are you have this idea that nothing belongs to you so everything is what is God. Offering everything to God will leads you again a liberation right. Getting rid of this problem, getting rid of this cycle of birth and birth right. So, Bhakti Yoga again is in a very important part in Bhagavad Gita as a karma yoga and he has given lot of importance to devotion and even in the later school for Shankaracharya and all they have given very importance to the Bhakti Yoga. On the third is Jnana Yoga. This is the union of finite self with infinite self through intuition. So, the Bhagavad Gita has in text there is a three kind of mention the three kinds of knowledge. There is rajasik knowledge, tamasik knowledge, sattvik knowledge and sattvik knowledge is the knowledge of unity in plurality with stress on unity. So, this path is about the knowledge when you are getting knowledge. So there are three knowledge and the sattvik knowledge is all about when you started getting this idea that how this world God is one right. So, God is one and undivided still exists in diverse creatures as if divided right. But when you through knowledge you realize that God is one and is in everywhere right. Then this is how you also may you also will achieve the

liberation right. So, there are three different path is mentioned in Bhagavad Gita the Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga and Gyan Yoga. For ethics purpose the Niskama Karma is a very important part and in Indian system a deontological philosophy is Bhagavad Gita ethics. And about the philosophical point of view Bhagavad Gita argues that there is a determinate God is the ultimate reality or ultimately determinate God is real. So, these are the very basic philosophy of Bhagavad Gita. We have discussed in very small time. We have discussed in basic level. We will be discussing the many different philosophy from a different school of thought. So, thank you for your kind attention. This talk was based on the text Indian Philosophy by Jadunath Sinha. Thank you so much for your kind attention. Thank you.