

## The Relevance of the Bhagavad Gita in Humanistic Education and Holistic Development

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### Abstract:

*The great purpose and thoughts of the Gita are beautifully related to human knowledge and consciousness. The relevance of the Gita for awakening the subject of values as well as for creating an open atmosphere of mutual knowledge is very far-reaching. When observing the overall consciousness, the mind moves towards the various dynamics of life, the subject of educational thought, truth and inner development. The subjects of meditation and harmonious perspective are also inextricably linked with the human consciousness. In the Gita, we not only find the source of religious knowledge, but also the path to human education and overall development. As a result, we also find a truth with the concept of lifelong education. Therefore, along with the words of the Gita, its theoretical aspects are seen to shine equally.*

**Keywords-**controlled life, physical and mental discipline, sense restraint, renunciation of ego.

### Objectives:

1. To observe how a controlled life can be lived.
2. To accumulate knowledge in life through physical and mental discipline.
3. To look into how the senses can be controlled.
4. To gain knowledge about how to lead life by abandoning ego.

### Methodology:

This proposed research paper has applied mixed research methods. When the subject of controlled life came up in the context of raising the relevance of humanistic education, there was a matter of gradual and continuous testing. Then when the subject of life through physical and mental discipline came up, the two subjects of observation and testing seemed to be equally applicable. The subject was not limited to this part only. When the subject of sense restraint came up in a relevant way for achieving overall development, now the subject of philosophical information search has found its place and above all, the systematic aspect of psychology has been applied as a matter of performance by abandoning egoism.

### Literature Review :

Chakraborty, Loknath and Basu, Suli have written down the issues of human education and overall development in their book *Gitaya Atmasanchalana o Mahabharat : Ekti Nibir Path in front of us in a row in the context of the Gita*. As a result, the readership has been facilitated to get the knowledge obtained from this book very easily and no obstacles have been presented. The issues of sense control, mind control, wisdom, and abandonment of ego have also been equally revealed in the book. It has been shown how human life can be beautiful and complete through self-control. An outline has been presented on how self-control or control over one's senses, mind, and intellect can be mastered. When we look at the various aspects of human development, we find a binding field for the underlying emotional truth that we find when we look at the various aspects of human development. And that issue has unfolded in a very beautiful way in this book. (*Basu, Suli, and Chakraborty, Loknath, 2019*) The Bhagavad Gita is far more than an ancient religious text; it serves as a timeless blueprint for navigating the complexities of human consciousness. At its heart, the scripture explores the profound intersection of spiritual wisdom and the practical dynamics of daily life.

When we talk about "humanistic education," the Gita suggests that true learning isn't just about absorbing facts, but about fostering an inner awakening and a harmonious perspective toward the world. Living a "controlled life" often sounds restrictive, yet the Gita reframes it as the ultimate path to freedom. (*Jayamani, C. V. 2013*).

*tatraikāgraṃ manaḥ kṛtvā yatacittendriyakriyāḥ |*

*upaviśyāsane yuñjyādyogātmaviśuddhaye || (BG 6.12)*

There, having made the mind one-pointed, with the actions of the mind and senses controlled, let him, seated on the seat, practice yoga for the purification of the self.

*“nātyaśhnatas tu yogo ’sti na chaikāntam anaśhnataḥ |  
na chāti svapna-śhīlasya jāgrato naiva chārjuna ||” (BG 6.16)*

By practicing physical and mental discipline, we aren't suppressing our nature; we are refining it. This process involves the conscious restraint of the senses and the courageous renunciation of the ego—that loud, internal "I" that often clouds our better judgment *“Tat Tvam Asi” (Cha. Up 6.8)*.

As we peel back these layers of vanity and impulse, we move toward a state of lifelong education and inner development. Ultimately, the Gita teaches us that by mastering our internal landscape, we create an open atmosphere of mutual knowledge and truth that enriches not just ourselves, but the entire human collective. (Kejriwal, A., & Krishnan, V. R. 2004)

The Gita presents a sophisticated psychological model where the physical and mental are not separate, but rather two layers of the same discipline.

*“deva-dwija-guru-prājñā-pūjanam śhaucham ārjavam |  
brahmacharyam ahimsā cha śhārīram tapa uchyate ||” (BG 17.14)*

This verse describes the physical foundation of a controlled life. It suggests that discipline of the body is more than just physical health; it is a form of active reverence. By showing respect to wisdom (the teacher and the wise) and practicing non-violence and purity, you are essentially training the body to be a receptive vessel. This is the "shading" of behavior mentioned earlier—where your physical actions are designed to minimize friction with the world. In the context of humanistic education, this physical discipline turns the body into a stable platform, allowing the mind to focus on higher truths without being distracted by physical restlessness or ethical guilt. (MUKHERJEE, M.S. 2017)

While the body handles the external "chariot," this verse focuses on the "driver"—the mind. Mental discipline is defined here through qualities like serenity (manaḥ-prasādaḥ) and silence (maunam). This is not just the absence of speech, but a state of internal quietude where the ego's constant chatter is silenced. By practicing gentleness and self-control, the practitioner refines their internal landscape so that thoughts are clear and free from the "I-maker's" bias.

*“manaḥ-prasādaḥ saumyatvaṁ maunam ātma-vinigrahaḥ |  
bhāva-saṁśuddhir ity etat tapo mānasam uchyate ||” (BG 17.16)*

The "steady wisdom" the text talks about. It's not about being a monk in a cave; it's about being in the middle of the world but having your senses under such a tight grip that your wisdom stays firm. Even the Nyaya school of logic points out that you can't actually see the truth if your mind is clouded by personal bias and lack of control. By mastering this internal landscape, you aren't just becoming "disciplined"—you're creating the only kind of atmosphere where real, lifelong education can actually happen. (Mukundananda, S. 2022)

*ātmanaṁ rathinaṁ viddhi śarīraṁ rathameva tu |  
buddhiṁ tu sārathiṁ viddhi manaḥ pragrahameva ca || (K .U 1.3.3 )*

Think of the Atman (the real you) as the passenger. The body is the chariot, the horses are your senses, and the reins are your mind. The "controlled life" happens when the Buddhi—your higher intellect—actually takes the driver's seat and pulls the reins tight. If the driver is asleep, the horses just run wherever they smell food or excitement, and the whole thing crashes.

To actually make this work in real life, move into the territory of Karma Yoga of Bhagavad Gita. (Muralikrishna, D. 2019 ) This is the practical side of physical and mental discipline. You aren't just "doing things"; you're training yourself to act without the ego constantly screaming about the results. When you detach from the "what's in it for me?" mindset, the physical act of working becomes a mental exercise in staying centered. It's a way of accumulating knowledge through action, proving that discipline isn't a burden, but the only way to keep your head clear.

*karmaṇyevādhikāraste mā phaleṣu kadācana |  
mā karmaphalāheturbhūrmā te saṅgo'stvakarmani || (BG 2.47)*

This leads into a deeper layer where Gyan (knowledge) and Bhakti (devotion) start to merge. Once you realize through the Nyaya perspective that your ego usually distorts the truth, you use devotion as a tool to quiet that "I-maker" (Ahamkara). It's much easier to control your life when you're focused on a higher purpose rather than just fighting your own desires by force. This is the "renunciation of ego" mentioned in your objectives—you aren't losing yourself; you're just losing the vanity that keeps you from seeing things as they really are.

Ultimately, this systematic approach creates that "open atmosphere" for lifelong education. By mastering the senses and the mind, the individual stops fighting themselves and starts growing. It's a constant process of observation and testing, just like your methodology suggests. When the "I" is no longer the center of the universe, you finally have the space for a harmonious perspective and true inner development. (Norton, J. 1968)

Integrating physical and mental discipline into a single psychological framework is essential for achieving a controlled life, as the Gita treats them as mutually reinforcing layers of human development. Physical discipline—the regulation of habits like sleep, diet, and movement—acts as the stabilizing foundation, ensuring the body remains a fit instrument rather than a source of distraction. However, without mental discipline, these habits are easily sabotaged by the ego's whims. This is where the concept of sense restraint becomes the vital bridge; it is the active practice of vetting every sensory input before it can disturb the mind's equilibrium. When an individual consciously limits what they consume, they are performing a physical act that builds the mental muscle required for "steady wisdom." Over time, this discipline transforms from a forced effort into a natural state where the internal "I" is no longer a slave to external triggers but remains centered in its own purpose.

The Gita's perspective on sense restraint is not one of self-punishment, but a logical necessity for maintaining intellectual clarity. It warns that even a person of great knowledge can be swept away if their senses are left unbridled, much like a strong wind carries away a boat on the water. This mirrors the wisdom found in the Upanisads, where the intellect must act as a sharp charioteer to keep the "horses" of the senses from running wild toward temporary cravings. Sense restraint is not about the forceful suppression of desires, but rather the strategic mastery of the mind's interaction with the external world.

*"viṣayā vinivartante nirāhārasya dehinaḥ, rasa-varjaṁ raso 'py asya param dr̥ṣṭvā nivartate"* (BG 2.59)

A person may physically abstain from enjoyment, yet the longing for those objects often lingers within the subconscious. This verse teaches that the "taste" or deep-seated craving only truly fades when one experiences a higher spiritual equilibrium. Without this inner shift, forced restraint is merely temporary; true control begins when the intellect recognizes a more fulfilling purpose than fleeting sensory pleasure.

*"rāga-dveṣa-viyuktaiḥ tu viṣayān indriyaiḥ caran, ātmavasyair vidheyātmā prasādam"* (BG 2.64)—provides a practical idea for achieving this state. It describes a person who moves among the objects of the senses—hearing, seeing, and touching—but remains free from the dualities of attachment and aversion. By keeping the senses under the governance of a disciplined self, the practitioner attains a state of Prasada, or divine tranquility. This suggests that the goal is not to hide from the world, but to navigate it with a regulated mind that is no longer a slave to impulsive likes and dislikes. (Sharma, A. 1997)

To achieve this, we have to look at the ego not as a thing we "kill," but as a structural error in our consciousness. In the Gita, the "I" (Ahamkara) is what creates the friction; it's the voice that says "I am the doer," which immediately leads to stress because if you are the doer, you are solely responsible for the result. By shading this "I-ness" out of our actions, we aren't becoming passive—we are becoming more efficient. When you stop worrying about your reputation or the prize, 100% of your mental energy goes into the task itself. (Sivakumar, K. S. 2020) This is the unpolished reality of humanistic education: it's about removing the obstacles to truth. This transition from being "ego-centric" to "truth-centric" is what allows for the open atmosphere you mentioned in your objectives. If two people are arguing from their egos, they are just hitting two walls together. If they renounce the

ego, they create a space where knowledge can actually flow. This "shading" of the self is supported by several key psychological shifts in the text.

*kārpanyadoṣopahatasvabhāvaḥ pṛcchāmi tvām dharmasammūḍhacetāḥ |  
yajchreyah syānniścitam brūhi tanme śiṣyaste 'ham śādhi mām tvām prapannam ||(BG 2.7)*

Once the mind is open, the discipline moves into the physical world. The ego thrives on "ownership" of results. To counter this, the Gita suggests a practice where every action—from the food you eat to the work you perform—is treated as an offering to something larger than yourself. This is the practical side of Karma Yoga. It's like a muscle: every time you do something and intentionally let go of the "credit," the ego gets a little bit smaller, and your focus on the "truth" gets a little bit sharper.

*yatkarōṣi yadaśnāsi yajjuhoṣi dadāsi yat |  
yattapasyasi kaunteya tatkuruṣva madarpaṇam ||(BG 9.27)*

By renouncing this specific delusion, you stop taking things personally. Failure no longer crushes you, and success no longer inflates you. This is the core of "overall development"—becoming someone who can act in the world without being damaged by it.

*prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ |  
ahaṅkāravimūḍhātmā kartāhamiti manyate ||(BG 3.27)*

*"The spirit soul bewildered by the influence of false ego thinks himself the doer of activities that are in actuality carried out by the three modes of material nature."*

Finally, the renunciation of ego leads to a state where you are no longer in competition with the world. When the "I-maker" is quiet,

*"tasmāt sarveṣhu kāleṣhu mām anusmara yudhya cha |  
mayy-arpita-mano-buddhir mām evaiṣhyasy-asaṅśayaḥ ||"(BG 8.7)*

you naturally become friendly and compassionate toward all living entities because you no longer see them as "others" to be defeated. This is the "open atmosphere of mutual knowledge" in its purest form. It proves that the highest form of humanistic education isn't just about what you know—it's about how much of the ego you've been able to shed to make room for others.

*"mat-karma-kṛṇ mat-paramo mad-bhaktaḥ saṅga-varjitaḥ |  
nirvairah sarva-bhūteṣhu yah sa māmēti pāṇḍava ||"(BG 11.55)*

The peak of the Gita's psychological map for self-mastery. It describes a person who has completely outsourced their ego to a higher purpose. By working without attachment to the "I-maker" and treating every living being with equal friendliness, the individual transcends the friction of the world. This state of Nirvaira (freedom from enmity) is the true sign of a renounced ego; you no longer see others as obstacles or rivals, but as part of the same universal consciousness. It's the ultimate "open atmosphere" for growth.

To conclude, the Bhagavad Gita's perspective on the renunciation of ego and a controlled life isn't just a collection of ancient moral codes; it's a rigorous psychological methodology for human development. By bridging physical discipline with sense restraint and the shedding of the "I-maker," the text provides a roadmap for moving from a state of reactive confusion to one of steady, purposeful wisdom. This "shading" of the ego allows for the open atmosphere of mutual knowledge that is so critical for any humanistic education. (Tiwari, P. 2020)

However, it would be a mistake to think this process is ever truly "finished" or perfectly linear. In the real world, the ego is incredibly resilient, and the "horses" of the senses are prone to stray even after years of training. The beauty of the Gita's approach—and what makes the concept of lifelong education so relevant—is that it acknowledges this human imperfection. The goal isn't necessarily a perfect, static state of being, but a continuous, systematic testing of one's own consciousness. As long as there is a sincere attempt to act without vanity and to see the truth beyond personal bias, the "shining theoretical aspects" of the Gita remain an active, living force in the student's life.

## Appendix

1. BG : Bhagavad Gita
2. Chandogya Upanisad



### 3. Kathopanishad

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