

# Exploring 'Self' in Digital Age "The Perspective of Shrimad Bhagwad Gita Philosophy"

Kiran Khevaria\*

Research Scholar

**Abstract – We are living in an era where the meaning of digital continues to change over time as new technologies, user devices are invented. A detail study in this context shows that the Man is influenced by both internal and external forces. The evolution of technology in daily life and social organization has led to the fact that the modernization of information and communication processes has become the driving force of social evolution.**

**This Paper explores some knowledge of "SELF" in digital Age from the perspective of Shrimad-Bhagwad-Gita philosophy which is 5,000 years old. A description has been given on self-knowledge that begins with self-observation, self-examination and self-evaluation. It also approach us to practice austerity of body, mind and speech to unfold the layers of self-glamour and illusion so that the truth is revealed for what they are, the deeper knowledge about the self. Self-knowledge brings in better understanding of the forces which influence man so that he can better understand his inner will or intention.**

**In this paper, some perspectives of self-knowledge from the Bhagavad-Gita has been presented which will enlightens us with several lessons on the knowledge of self and the era in which we are living now.**

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## INTRODUCTION

We are living in a modern era where the evolution and use of digital technology became prevalent and of common use throughout the world. The Digital Age or New media age is a period in human history characterized by technology which increases the speed and breadth of knowledge turnover within the economy and society. The digital age began in earnest with the widespread use of the Internet.

The Digital Era can be seen as the development of an evolutionary system in which knowledge-based society is surrounded by a high-tech global economy that spans over its influence on how the manufacturing throughout and the service sector operate in an efficient and convenient way.

It is also true that the meaning of digital continues to change over time as new technologies and user devices are invented. Man is influenced by both internal and external forces. We have come a long way from the days when we were reliant on the natural cycles of light and dark to determine when to rise and when to sleep — digital devices are just the latest development in a process where we began to shape our environment and our routines with technology. The evolution and use of technology in our daily life has become ubiquitous throughout the world.

As a matter of fact that every human being is so deeply involved in this digital age that we do not have even time to examine and analyze of our own unrealized spiritual or intellectual capacities. We utilize our senses, mind, and intellect to explore, discover, and conclude about the nature of the truth. Our senses, mind, and intellect are made from the material energy, they are imperfect and limited. As a result, we can never be completely sure about the accuracy and reliability of the knowledge we gain through them.

The deeper understanding of self-knowledge has many benefits. It helps people understand and accept who they are and why they do, what they do, which improves self-esteem, communication and relationships. The self is the sense of 'I-consciousness' or individuality that we all have, though initially our identity is unclear. It is only after a long, sustained effort that we will be able to realize the true nature of this 'I.' The process of arriving at this knowledge is what we call self-transformation. Those who have restrained and control over their self in this digital age and are endowed with disciplined mind can reap the full benefits of Gita which is the 'Science of the Soul'.

The Bhagwad-Gita is a sermon given by Shri Krishna to Arjuna regarding the correct technique of life. Many renowned scholars, teachers and

philosophers from all over the world have commented on Bhagwad-Gita. The Bhagwad-Gita is universal and non sectarian and its teaching are applicable not only for Indians but to every person who exists in the world. The messages of Bhagwad-Gita enlighten the spiritual development of a person and it also explores the deeper knowledge of Self. "Self-knowledge" brings in better understanding of the external forces which distract us from our inner soul.

The Bhagwad-Gita enlightens us with several lessons on the knowledge of the self and the world. A Correlation exists between the self-knowledge and the outer world as our understanding is generally dependent upon our ability to correlate, interpret, and assimilate information gained through our senses. Man's understanding of the world around him is proportional to the understanding of the self.

As we all know, that Bhagwad-Gita was given on the battle field before the commencement of the war of Mahabharata. The battlefield represents our body where an unending battle is raging between the forces of good and evil. If we talk about the spiritual level, the forces are on the battle between higher self and the lower self. The war is in between man's spiritual calling verses the dictates of the body, mind and senses for material pleasures which are electronic devices.

Self-knowledge begins with the self-observation, self-examination and self-evaluation and there by developing certain qualities which is known as divine qualities.

#### Chapter 16: verses 1:

abhayaṁ sattva-sanśhuddhir jñāna-yoga-vyavasthitiḥ

dānaṁ damaśh cha yajñaśh cha svādhyāyas tapa  
ājīvam..||

ahinsā satyam akrodhas tyāgaḥ śhāntir apaiśhunam

dayā bhūteṣhv aloluptvaṁ mārdaṁ hrīr  
achāpalam..||

tejaḥ kṣhamā dhṛitiḥ śhaucham adroho nāti-mānitā

bhavanti sampadaṁ daivīm abhijātasya bhārata..||

In Chapter 16 of Bhagwad-Gita, Lord Krishna said: Fearlessness, purity of heart, firmness in acquiring Self-knowledge, charity, sense control, sacrifice, study of scriptures, mind control, honesty; (16.01)

Non-violence, truthfulness, absence of anger, samnyasa, calmness, abstaining from mean talk, Compassion for all creatures, freedom from greed, gentleness, humility, absence of indecision;

Intelligence, forgiveness, courage, cleanliness, absence of hatred, and absence of pride; these are the qualities of those endowed with divine virtues.

Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad-Gita has given a clear description of how to develop spiritually. Lord Krishna has explained about senses that are notorious in their ability to drag the mind deeper into material illusion. They tempt the living being to seek immediate gratification. That is why we are getting attracted towards the digital technology. Thus, restraint of the senses is an essential virtue for treading the path to God. The body-mind-senses are such that, if we pamper them, they become pleasure-seeking, but if we restrain them, they become disciplined. Thus, austerity is the voluntary acceptance of hardships for purifying the body, mind, and intellect.

In chapter 17, Sri Krishna has advised to practice austerity of body, mind and speech to unfold the layers of self-glamour and illusion so that the truth is revealed for what they are, and the deeper knowledge about the self and its relationship to every other life are uncovered.

The peace of mind, gentleness, silence, sense-restraint, and the purity of thought are called the sense control of thought and mind. (17.16)

If we learn how to master our mind, the body and speech will automatically get mastered. That is why the Austerity of the mind is higher than the austerity of body and speech. Therefore each action, activity, feeling, thought, and tendency should be examined carefully. Man is influenced by both internal and external forces. Man should honestly accept responsibility for his own behavior and his response to any situation. Self-Knowledge brings in better understanding of the forces that influence man and so that he can better understand his will or intention. Self-knowledge helps in understanding the reality or purpose that underlies all events and appearance in the manifested universe.

The Bhagavad-Gita illustrates the importance of the control of the mind for gaining the self-knowledge. Verses 5&6 in chapter 6 of the Bhagavad-Gita say:

uddhared ātmanātmānam nātmānam avasādayet

ātmaiva hyātmāno bandhur ātmaiva ripur ātmanaḥ

bandhur ātmātmanas tasya yenātmāivātmanā jitaḥ

anātmānas tu śhatrutve vartetātmaiva śhatru-vat  
(6.5-6)

One must elevate, not degrade, oneself by one's own "mind". The mind alone is one's friend as well as one's enemy. (6.05)

The mind is the "friend" of those who have control over it, and the mind acts like an enemy for those who do not control it. (6.06)

The external demons may injure us for some time, but the demons sitting within our own mind have the ability to make us live in constant wretchedness. We all know people who had everything favorable in the world, but lived miserable lives because their own mind tormented them incessantly through depression, hatred, tension, anxiety, and stress. So when Shree Krishna says that we must use the mind to elevate the self, he means we must use the higher mind to elevate the lower mind. In other words, we must use the intellect to control the mind while we are stuck with digitalization for our survival in life.

However, the same mind has the potential of becoming our best friend, if we bring it under control of the intellect, through spiritual practice. The more powerful an entity is, the greater is the danger of its misuse, and also the greater is the scope for its utilization. Since the mind is such a powerful machine fitted into our bodies, it can work as a two-edged sword. Thus, those who slide to demoniac levels do so because of their own mind while those who attain sublime heights also do so because of their purified minds.

So in essence the Lord says that living in humility, with compassion and with honest detachment and through the control of mind, the self-realized man can understand the true self and the world around him. Such a man is continually aware of his actions, reactions, and interactions with the inner and outer worlds. Balanced between the self and the outer world, the self-realized man stands as a responsive and willing servant of the Supreme Lord and the humanity. Thus, with the study of Bhagavad-Gita, we can explore our Self-knowledge with deeper meaning in the digital age.

## CONCLUSION

Today our generation is growing up in an era where digital age is growing vastly. They are witnessing the creation and evolution of the internet, computers, social networking sites, Google. iPhone's, iPad's and the countless other technological devices. Man is deeply influenced by these electronic gadgets like they are breathing with these technologies. The evolution of technology in daily life and social organization has led to the fact that the modernization of information and communication processes has become the driving force of social evolution.

In this paper, some perspectives of self-knowledge from the Bhagavad-Gita have been presented in the context of exploring 'Self' in Digital age. One should practice the self-knowledge that begins with self-

observation, self-examination and self-evaluation. Self-knowledge brings in better understanding of the It also approach us to practice the austerity of body, mind and speech to unfold the layers of self-glamour and illusion so that the truth is revealed for what they are, the deeper knowledge about the self-forces which influence man so that he can better understand his inner will or intention.

To achieve the higher level of innovativeness, one should explore some self-knowledge in this age otherwise we will be left with the mental emotional struggles, depression and even addiction. We hope this will provide the basis for more research on the exploration of Self-knowledge from the perspective of Bhagavad-Gita philosophy.

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**Corresponding Author**

**Kiran Khevaria\***

Research Scholar

E-Mail – [tomar.kiran@gmail.com](mailto:tomar.kiran@gmail.com)