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The *Bhagavadgita* and Nietzsche: A Study Concerning the Ethics of Moving Beyond

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Abstract:

Each human endeavour aims at achieving a meaningful experience of worldly existence. Now, a few questions arise and whose answers we must seek. Firstly, what is that which has the highest meaning about one's life and secondly, how could one achieve that highest and continue to work in this world? Human beings have constantly been trying to seek answers to each of these questions. Several centuries have passed, and the search continues. Such a long journey in the quest for meaning has created angst within man, and out of such angst, he announces the meaninglessness of life. In the contemporary state of affairs, life is devoid of any purpose and significance, resulting in man's life-negating attitude, where he finds a huge gap between what he thinks and what he does. However, both in the East and West, traditions believe that the highest goal of life can be achieved when one performs one's action in the best possible manner. In other words, life is best meant in action, wherein passivity leads to meaninglessness. To have negative conclusions about life is merely an inability on the part of an individual to understand reality or to put substantial efforts in that direction. On such an account, the emphasis on action in life has necessitated the importance of man's ethical conduct in the worldly state of affairs. In this regard, the doctrine of *Māyā* occupies a unique position in the Indian philosophical tradition to understand the fundamental problem of existence and its meaning. Accordingly, it helps to understand the nature of existence, the world of experience and the ultimate reality. In the Indian tradition, life's highest goal is to realise the ultimate reality (*Brahman*). On a similar account, the *Bhagavadgita* believes that the highest goal of life is achieved by performing one's duty with great purity without having any concern for the fruits of action, pleasure or pain. The doctrine of *Māyā* plays a very significant role in representing the spirit of *Gita*. Similarly, Nietzsche also believes that the highest meaning of life is in doing or acting.

Accordingly, he emphasises the ethical aspect of human existence, and his ethics strongly suggests moving beyond the binaries of good and evil. Though both *Māyā* and Nietzsche belong to different traditions, there remains a ground of convergence and dialogue. The ground on which they both stand together is that they give greater emphasis on the present life, which further necessitates man's ethical conduct. This paper highlights the possible correspondences and affinities between them, which are drawn while brooding over the matter.

Keywords: *Bhagavadgita, Māyā, ethics, Nietzsche, beyond good and evil.*

Introduction

The *Bhagavadgita*, *Upaniṣad* and *Brahmasutra* form the triple canon of Vedic literature. All these works deal with the knowledge of the supreme consciousness (*Brahman*). The *Bhagavadgita* belongs to the *bhisma parva* of the *Mahabharata*, the greatest epic, and it comprises eighteen chapters which include 700 *slokas*. The appeal makes the *Bhagavadgita* significant, as it teaches both metaphysics and ethics. Metaphysics deals with the Supreme Reality and ethics prescribe how to work in this world after knowing the reality. It teaches that having lived in the physical body, one can still possess the whole truth of consciousness. In the first chapter of the *Bhagavadgita*, Arjuna's ethical problems are described, wherein he has been stuck in a dilemma of whether to be or not to be. He could not decide whether to wage war against his people or step back from the war and save himself from the sin of killing one's relatives. Having found Arjuna in such a devastating condition, Narayana (Krishna), in the middle of the *Mahabharata*, bestowed him the nectar of non-dualistic wisdom. Arjuna's problem is not only his alone but also of the whole of humanity. The crisis that Arjuna underwent many centuries ago is that of right knowing and right doing, which the modern man still faces in his daily life. The doctrine of *Māyā* plays a significant role in resolving the metaphysical and ethical problem of Arjuna and humankind in general. The contemporary resonance of *Gita* and its teachings inspires one to meditate upon such an issue.

On the other hand, Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900), one of the modern European thinkers, also addresses the issue of human existence and comes forth with a similar observation as that made by the *Bhagavadgita*. He, too, emphasises man's ethical conduct and advocates that human existence finds its true meaning through its living. One's life is guided by what one does, and one's doing, to a greater extent, is determined by what

one knows. Here again, we see that proper knowing determines right doing and finally, right doing decides right living. When the whole emphasis is upon ethical conduct, of necessity, there is a call for an understanding of the moral ideals to which one is subscribed. According to Nietzsche, Christian ideals have no objectivity and, therefore, need for transvaluation. In a later discussion, we will see how Nietzsche makes an experiential distinction between moralities and reaches a conclusion to prescribe immoral ethics or the ethics of moving beyond.

The doctrine of *Māyā* and the nature of two-fold reality

As we know, the *Bhagavadgita* deals with metaphysics and ethics; *brahmavidya* and *yogsastra*, the science of reality and art of union with reality and accordingly, the question of the problem of human action is explained at length. Here, we get suggestions about how one can live in the highest self and continue to work in the world. What *Gita* brings forth before us is similar to what Upaniṣads have to teach, wherein they explain that the manifestation of reality in this world is twofold, *amurta* (formless) and *murta* (with form). Accordingly, knowledge of each is categorised as *apara vidyā* (knowledge of the formless or unmanifested) and *para vidyā* (knowledge of the formed or manifested). In this regard, Upaniṣad observes:

*dve vāva brahmaṇo rūpe, mūrtam
caivāmūrtam ca, martyam cāmṛtam
ca, sthitam ca, yac ca, sac ca, tyac ca (Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad II.3.1).*

Verily, there are two forms of Brahman, the formed and formless, the mortal and the immortal, the unmoving and the moving and the actual (existent) and the true (being). (*The Principal Upaniṣads* 192-193).

When we understand reality and its manifestation in the world, we come across contradictory predicates of the Supreme reality. Firstly, it manifests itself in things that have form and, secondly, in formless things. Its unfolding comes into both mortal and immortal categories. The supreme can be observed both in the moving and unmoving. Such contradictory predicates of the supreme prove its two-fold nature. From the given categories, it is evident that there will undoubtedly be one with preference over the other. In other words, one will have privilege in the hierarchical order. Now it becomes necessary to understand what role such hierarchy plays in the nature of reality. Upaniṣads describe *Brahman* as both

transcendent and immanent. In the transcendental state, it is absolutely without having any involvement in the world and, therefore, is unaffected by the imperfections of the world. While in the immanent state, *Īśvara* is involved in the world through its manifestations and illustrations. *Brahman* and *Īśvara* are identical, but *Īśvara* is limited only to this world. The manifested is less real than the unmanifested.

In the empirical situation, under the spell of *Māyā*, an individual sees the world from a relative standpoint. His idea of reality is based on the apparent things he holds to be Ultimate without knowing the underlying reality. For example, he considers his body real without understanding that it is subject to decay and degeneration; therefore, his idea about reality based on such bodily consciousness is bound to have misleading consequences. Consequently, he sees things in the categories of cause and effect, beginning and end. Due to *avidyā* (inadequate knowledge or wrong knowledge), an individual, while comprehending the objects, events, and situations of the world, mistakes unreal with real, darkness with light, gross with subtle and so on. Here, it becomes utmost necessary to enhance one's ability of comprehension to such an extent that one can make a distinction between real and unreal, darkness and light, beginning and end, and the like. With such wisdom, one could successfully progress in one's pursuit of truth. In this regard, *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* makes a prayer:

asato mā sadgamaya, tamaso mā

jyotir gamaya, mṛtyor māmṛtaṁ gamaya (Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad I.3.28).

from the unreal lead me to the real, from darkness lead me to light,

From death lead me to immortality (*The Principal Upaniṣads* 162).

Here, the aspirant seeks a refined understanding of the world when he could be out of the maze of ignorance (*avidyā*) and finds himself in a position to make a correct judgment about truth and reality. When an individual comprehends the situations around him from an empirical standpoint, he is bound to make errors because these empirical categories are full of dualities and contradictions. Consequently, it becomes necessary for the individual to transgress them. With *jñāna* (adequate knowledge or proper knowledge), one can make successful movements from darkness to light, unreality to reality, and, finally, from death to life. With such a sense of distinction, one can see things from the absolute standpoint where he realises his oneness with the supreme reality because reality is identical to the self. Now, he is no longer confused about the beginning and the end; instead, he sees the beginningless

and endless reality. In *Māyā* doctrine, *jñāna* (self-realisation) alone brings about liberation, and liberation is the highest experience one could have about living in the world. It is due to *avidyā* that man considers temporal things real without understanding the underlying reality. With such an approach towards life, one is confined to the worries of profit and loss. Hence, empirical categories have caused an individual to forget the true nature of self and, consequently, call for an urge to move from empirical (sensual) apprehension of truth towards a more refined and rational (harmonised) experience. Rational experience is such an experience when the individual is in an independent state where he is no longer attached to the fruits of his action. Scriptural texts have suggested various methods for an individual to be rational in decision-making. In this regard, *Bhagavadgita* observes that:

*tasmāt tvam indriyānyādau
niyamyā bharatarṣabha
pāpmānam prajahi hyenam
jñānavijñānanāśanam (Bhagavadgita III.41).*

Therefore, O Best of Bharatas (Arjuna) control thy senses from the beginning and slay this sinful destroyer of wisdom and discrimination (*The Bhagavadgita* 171).

Here, what *Gita* suggests is that one must have ratiocinated knowledge. When a man considers the sensuous information as final, he is bound to make an error because such realisation fades and withers with time. Having satisfied the need of the senses, one gets pleasure; later, when such pleasure ceases, one becomes sorrowful and experiences pain. None have permanence about themselves. Finally, he realises that his senses have deceived him. Therefore, it is strongly suggested that one should control one's senses instead of being controlled by them. Thus, such experience cannot be knowledge, or the knowledge of the senses is lower, and with such knowledge, one cannot realise reality. Now, we understand that both forms of reality have their importance. Though the lower form of reality is subject to decay and degeneration yet is necessary to prepare ways for the higher order of reality.

Nietzsche and the Crisis of Modernity

Nietzsche critically assesses the contemporary condition of man and finds that there is no coherent relation between what man thinks and what man does. This separation is such that he feels like a stranger in the world, which eventually leads him into despair to the extent that he loses faith in himself and develops a life-negating attitude. On a similar account,

scholars too comment that in modern times, "man seems to have lost the ontological sense, the sense of his organic relationship to Being Man finds himself a stranger in an alien universe" (Chaudhuri 5). In this regard, it is worth mentioning Nietzsche's observation on the matter:

We are unknown to ourselves, we men of knowledge- and with good reason. We have never sought ourselves— how could it happen that we should ever find ourselves? It has rightly been said: "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also";... there is one thing we really care about from the heart— "bringing something home".... So we are necessarily strangers to ourselves, we have misunderstand ourselves, for us the law "Each is furthest from himself" applies to all eternity—we are not "men of knowledge" with respect to ourselves (*On The Genealogy of Morals* 15).

Here, what Nietzsche speaks is that man, in his materialistic approach towards life claims to have made extraordinary achievements where he takes pride in 'having', making himself far away from 'being'. His sense of progress focused only on the material aspect of life, ignoring the spiritual side. Such ignorance on the part of man leads him to a state where despite having all the material possession feels hollow. Devoid of spiritual satisfaction about his existence, man is merely a stranger to himself. Through his critique of modernity, we come to understand that Nietzsche is putting his intellectual efforts into seeking the answer to a question that has always been an essential quest in the journey of humankind- How are we to endure life? The answer to this question finds inception in the approach by which he presents his arguments through his writings. In his earlier works, he presents the task of "Yes saying" followed by the "No saying, No doing part" in the later works (*Ecce Homo* 310). When he talks about the 'yes saying' attitude in the first place, we understand that with strong conviction, he asserts to encourage such ideals of human endeavour that would enable man to make affirmations that would lead him to accept life with its truth. While in the second place, 'no saying' attitude suggests the wrong practices adopted by man, which have led him to a state where he encounters an existential crisis and finds life meaningless on this earth.

Now a question arises, what caused human life to decline? Above and beyond, Nietzsche observes that the decay and degeneration of life, generally, could be understood in the manners and effects brought about by the categories that govern human life. When an individual puts all his endeavours into finding a cause for such a crisis, one could find that human categories such as social conditions, cultural situations, and religious circumstances

are widely responsible. Moreover, to the greatest surprise, each is so much so that each exceeds the other. In this regard, religion in modern times is the most decadent influence depriving one of judiciously supporting the facts in favour of faith and acceptance. To a large extent, religion suggests living life in a particular manner that strongly emphasises things to do and things not to do. Such restrictions on human conduct are meant to meet with the sublime experience of man in his journey of life. Moreover, religion functions through morals and such morals are expected to refine man's behaviour, which would finally lead him to realise the highest truth. Now a question arises of whether there is any fullness derived from such religious experience. Taking into consideration with great seriousness, Nietzsche critically assesses the Christian morals followed by modern man. According to him, Christianity does not have any fullness about the experience it offers to the practitioners and subscribers. Rather it purports deception from the insubstantial worth of imageries in the name of holy trinity, blessedness, deliverance, repentance, redemption, morality, and the like. He understands that the very religion cannot answer the question because it has created conspicuous ironies. In this regard, he observes:

Nihilism stands at the door: whence comes this uncanniest of all guests? Point of departure: it is an error to consider "social distress" or "physiological degeneration" or, worse, corruption, as the cause of nihilism. Ours is the most decent and compassionate age. Distress, whether of the soul, body, or, intellect, cannot of itself give birth to nihilism (i.e., the radical repudiation of value, meaning, and desirability). Such distress always permits a variety of interpretations. Rather: it is in one particular interpretation, the Christian-moral one, that nihilism is rooted (*The Will to Power* 7).

In his account of the study of morals, Nietzsche could differentiate them into various types. Such differentiation of morals could be made possible by assessing the attitude of the possessor and the experience he achieves through these morals. Accordingly, comes up with two main categories: firstly, 'aristocratic morality', which has a very strong affirmative outlook towards life; secondly, 'slave' or 'herd morality', which is defined by its negative attitude about life. The experience of an individual living in the world largely depends on the attitude with which he comes to living his life. Aristocratic morality "springs from a triumphant affirmation of its demands". The possessor of such morality is confident about his needs and desires, is assertive enough to put forth his demands, and can go to any extent to meet them. The aristocrats feel they belong to a higher order than their fellows. While on the other hand, slave morality "says "no" from the very outset to what is "outside itself",

"different from itself", and "not itself", and this "no" is its creative deed". They try to fit in with their fellow beings without making any effort to improve their living. Unlike in aristocratic morality, the possessor of slave morality is not confident about their dreams and desires and depends on an "external" and "objective" world for its existence. In slave morality, there is no committed involvement on the part of the individual while acting; instead, the action is a passive reaction. We have seen that in aristocratic morality, the individual is very assertive and confident in expressing himself; in slave morality, we could see that assertion and confidence in the individual are very much missing. Whatever is expressed is just a reaction developed from the inability to articulate its needs and demands. On the one hand, the aristocratic system of values has spontaneity in its action and growth. While on the other hand, slave morality lacks spontaneity as far as its action and development are concerned.

For a better understanding of the view of the matter, let us look into the experiential distinction between good and bad, good and evil made by Nietzsche, which he comes to have made based on his study about the moral and ethical behaviour of man. According to Nietzsche, the noble or aristocratic souls are of higher order, for they are powerful, rich, commanders, possessors and masters of their destinies. They are truthful because they are the possessor of reality— who is actual and true. The value judgments of such souls are inspired by an intense physicality, abundance, overflowing health and the like, which in turn leads to war, adventure, hunting, dancing and all that involves a vigorous joyful activity which further leads to higher experience in life. Their value equation is such that good equals noble, noble equals powerful, powerful equals beautiful, beautiful equals happy, and the happy being equals the beloved of God. While on the other hand, the priestly soul is addressed as the most evil enemy because they are impotent, and out of their impotence, hatred grows in them. Out of such poisonous hatred, they inverted the aristocratic value equation where wretched equals good, poor equals good, impotent equals good, lowly equals good and the sufferer, deprived, sick and ugly are alone beloved of God. And in the contemporary situation, a man seems to live his life with the priestly mode of valuation where the evil in the weak is outside himself or beyond his capacity and, thus, associates the 'good' with himself. Hence, we can see that good is not good and evil is not evil to the extent that good is pleasant and evil being unfulfilled is unpleasant. Consequently, such value judgment has the origin of slave morality. We come to understand through Nietzsche's observation that the true meaning of life is beyond the value judgement of good and evil.

The Ethics of Moving Beyond in The *Bhagavadgita* and Nietzsche

The highest meaning can be best attained when there is the best representation of one's existence, and to represent oneself, one needs bodily existence. It is through the body that one lives, grows and enjoys this world. Without having attended to bodily needs, one cannot make a living, but having attended to those needs, one must move beyond. Arjuna's problem was because of his ignorance, wherein he identifies himself and others with the body. To resolve his problem, *Gita* suggests that identity related to the body is not real and thereby suggests:

*aśocyān anvaśocas tvam
prajñāvādāmś ca bhāṣase
gatāsūn agatāsūmś ca
nā' nuśocanti paṇḍitāḥ (Bhagavadgita II.11).*

Thou grievest for those whom thou shouldst not grieve for, and yet thou speakest words about wisdom. Wise men do not grieve for the dead or for the living (*The Bhagavadgita* 115).

On account of one's living life in this world, one is bound to come to terms with both pleasure and pain, good and bad. In an ordinary situation, one sees life in binaries and is prone to commit an error, having gotten overwhelmed in either of the situations. Now, several questions become necessary to be answered. Firstly, who is in a position to have a realisation about himself which is total and complete? Secondly, what value would he adopt to reach his goal without having any indulgences? *Gita* would suggest that *stitha prajñā* has such wisdom. In this regard, let us see the following observations:

*prajahāti yadā Kāmān
sarvān pārtha manogatān
ātmanyevātmāna tuṣṭaḥ
sthitaprajñastadocyate (Bhagavadgita II.55).*

When a man puts away all the desires of his mind,
O Partha (Arjuna), and when his spirit is content in itself,
Then is he called stable in intelligence (*The Bhagavadgita* 140).

And also:

duḥkheṣvanudvignamanāḥ
sukheṣu vigataspr̥hah
vītarāgabhayakrodhaḥ
Sthitadhīrmunirucyate (*Bhagavadgita* II.56).

He whose mind is untroubled in the midst of sorrows and is free from eager desire amid pleasures, he from whom passion, fear and rage have passed away, he is called a sage of settled intelligence (*The Bhagavadgita* 141).

And also the following:

yah sarvatranabhisnehas-
tat-tat prapya subhasubham
nabhinandati na dvesti
tasya prajna pratisthita (*Bhagavadgita* II.57).

He who is without affection on any side, who does not rejoice or loathe as he obtains good or evil, his intelligence is firmly set (in wisdom) (*The Bhagavadgita* 141).

On the other hand, Nietzsche would answer that Zarathustra is an authority who lives life to the fullest and whose actions are not guided by external symbols and objects; rather, he emphasises the perfection of his inner self. According to Nietzsche, Zarathustra believes in truthfulness as the highest virtue. In his opinion, the truthful person "is not estranged or removed from reality but is reality itself and exemplifies all that is terrible and questionable in it" (*Ecce Homo* 331). In this regard, he further observes Zarathustra's take on self-overcoming, where he tells us that life is revealed to him as one who is in a constant process of self-overcoming (Jenkins 2016). In this regard, Zarathustra observes:

And this secret did Life herself tell to me. 'Behold,' she said, 'I am that which must always overcome itself.

'Indeed, you call it will to procreate or drive for a purpose, for what is higher, farther, more manifold: but all this is one and one secret (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra* 99-100).

Nietzsche, also suggests that one must not despise body and life on earth, for it is a sin to do so. In this regard, let us look at another observation:

'Behold, I teach to you Overhuman!

'The Overhuman is the sense of the earth. May your will say: Let the Overhuman be the sense of the earth!

'I beseech you, my brothers, stay true to the earth and do not believe to those who talk of over-earthly hopes! They are poison-mixers, whether they know it or not.

'They are despisers of life, moribund and poisoned themselves, of whom the earth is weary: so let them pass on!

'Once sacrilege against God was the greatest sacrilege, but God died, and thereby the sacrilegious died too. Sacrilege against the earth is now the most terrible thing, and to revere the entrails of the unfathomable more than a sense of the earth! (12).

We see that Nietzsche's ethics has a greater emphasis on living life with the body, but at the same time, he too is well aware of the fact that the body has limitations and, thereby, suggests bringing transformation of spirit through discipline and self-overcoming. Again, let us see the observation made by Nietzsche in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, which he makes in relation to the transformation of the spirit. He says:

Three transformations of the spirit I name for you: how the spirit becomes camel, and the camel a lion, and the lion at last a child.

....

What is heavy? Thus asks the weight-bearing spirit, and thus it kneels down, like the camel, and would be well laden.

....

But in the loneliest desert the second transformation occurs: the spirit here becomes a lion; it will seize freedom for itself and become lord in its own desert.

....

What is the great dragon that the spirit no longer likes to call Lord and God? 'thou shalt' is the name of the great dragon but the spirit of the lion says 'I will.'

....

Once it loved, as most sacred for it, 'thou shalt': now it must find delusion and caprice even in the most sacred, that it might seize its freedom from its love: for this predation the lion is needed.

But say, my brothers, what can the child yet do that even the lion could not do? Why must the predatory lion yet become a child?

Innocence the child is and forgetting, a beginning anew, a play, a self-propelling wheel, a first movement, a sacred Yea-saying.

Yes, for the play of creating, my brothers, a sacred Yea-saying is needed: the spirit now wills its own, the one who had lost the lord attains its own world (23-24).

Here, what Nietzsche suggests is all about undergoing transmigration, where one has to bring transformation in one's spirit. In the first place to the spirit of camel, in the second to the spirit of a lion and finally, to the spirit of a child. By the spirit of camel, he means one who is ready to take the burden on himself, which in turn suggests a person who is confident about one's strength. Such spirit contrasts the attitude of the weak, who has self-pity on him and escapes from taking responsibility for his present life in this world. Though the camel is ready to take the burden yet is dutiful where it is not free to choose but can only obey. Having realised such a change in attitude about oneself, one must move to the spirit of the lion. Here, the lion is suggestive of higher strength that no longer obeys but has the freedom to will. Here, the attitude transforms from 'thou shalt' to 'I will'; there is a change from the spirit of obeying to the spirit of will. And finally, the transformation from a lion's spirit to a child's spirit is suggested. Upon realising the spirit of willingness, one must progress to the spirit of creating. The child's spirit suggests innocence, which further suggests forgetting and forgetting is the necessary ingredient for re-creating. What makes Nietzsche suggest the three metamorphoses is underlain in the condition of humankind that has been the same for several centuries, where man has lost his power to create new values. Here, what is to be noted is the progression of man from realising his identity as a creature to the identity of himself as a creator. Here, the child symbolises the innocence of existence or forgetfulness, which is necessary for creativity. Again, here we find a suggestion for moving beyond.

Comparison

In the empirical situation or an ordinary state of existence, one sees life in categories where he, out of ignorance, can only see things in binaries; good and bad, happiness and sorrow, good and evil, and the like. In each of these situations, there is either an abundance of a thing or a total lack of it. Having attained any of such state, one gets overwhelmed, and this overwhelming becomes the cause of anxiety where an abundance of something brings a sense of pride in man and lacking it creates a sense of contempt within him. Both these situations become hurdle which limits the possibilities of having a total or complete realisation about one's existence. The reason for these conditions to be limited is that these categories have inherent dualities and inner contradictions about their origin and development. To a greater extent, Nietzsche understood the limitations of these worldly categories, and he, therefore, asserts that there is no objectivity about these empirical categories and, consequently,

prescribed to transcend them. Ordinarily, one's actions distract one from his true being. When one associates oneself with the act of doing good or doing evil and thinks of himself as the agent or doer of such act, such association or identification of oneself with the acts makes him reap the fruits of such actions. On the other hand, such association exposes him to the result of such actions; pleasure and pain, happiness or sorrow and the like.

Now a question arises that when the whole emphasis is mainly on action and while performing one's action, one is bound to get affected by the fruits of such action. Then, who is such an authority who can be free from the impurities of worldly things and yet perform all his duties in worldly affairs? What are the qualities of such a person who does not get affected by the results of his actions? Nietzsche's 'free spirit' and Zarathustra are authorities who have transcended the binaries of good and evil. Here, Nietzsche's idea of transcending such situations is very similar to the Upaniṣadic teaching, where one is suggested to adopt the value of *vairagya* (non-attachment).

Further, in this direction, we have in the *Bhagavadgita* which it suggests that the true self is beyond categories and thereby immunised by the results of actions. On such an account, it is further advised that one should act keeping in mind; that one is not the enjoyer or doer of any action because one is neither the body nor the mind and thereby is free from charges of being called a good doer or evil doer. This is what Nietzsche suggests when he asks us to go beyond good and evil. While making such a suggestion, he echoes the teachings of Gita, where an individual is expected not to limit his identity with the body, mind or intellect because they are subject to change and mutation. Rather, one is expected to associate with the higher spirit that grows and evolves. In the words of *Gita*, it is the *stith prajñā* who, like Nietzsche's Zarathustra, remains unaffected by the results of their actions yet performs worldly duties with strong conviction and utmost faith. Actions without attachment do not lead to bondage and make one free to be in a position have brought about the best representation of his worldly existence.

Conclusion

The *Bhagavadgita*, through the doctrine of *Māyā* proceeds to resolve the ethical problem of man by resolving the metaphysical issue about truth and reality, and it is through the knowledge of truth that one could best execute one's actions. Similarly, Nietzsche also holds that the 'doing' is guided by 'knowing'. *Gita* suggests that the highest meaning of life could be attained through this body while living in this world. Instead of rejecting the duties

and relationships of life as an illusion, it accepts them as challenges and opportunities for the realisation of freedom of the spirit. The necessary condition is to adopt the value of self-transcendence, where one does not restrict his identity with the body but goes beyond in the pursuit of truth. On the other hand, Nietzsche treats the body as the vehicle to realise the world in the first place and, later, proceed through self-transcendence/self-overcoming to realise the higher truth. Here transcendence suggests moving beyond psychological limitations. In both, there is an urge for self-discipline and inner perfection to know the greater truth. Thus, in both the *Bhagavadgita* and Nietzsche, the ethics of moving beyond is highly prescribed.

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