



Bhagavad Gita: A Guiding Faculty

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Abstract: The world is moving so fast so that one can find oneself unable to pace up with. The modern generation is confused about the ways of the world. The present research paper on “Bhagavad Gita: A Guiding Faculty” is an honest attempt to decipher the holy text and its relevance in modern times. *Bhagavad Gita As It Is* and *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita* are prescribed for analysis. The Sanskrit, Hindi and English translations were considered to grab the meaning of the text. *Karma Yoga* is found to be the best among Lord Krishna’s teachings. The present research paper highlights the importance of *Karma Yoga* to attain the human wellbeing.

Key words: Karma Yoga, Dharma, Mental health, Physical health and Duty.

The modern and technologically developed world is full of chaos. The present time is full of competition. Human beings are conquering the world which was once unapproachable and inaccessible. Moreover humans are conquering the other humans too and affecting their mental health. Everyone is struggling for their lives, completely uncertain to make decisions for themselves. Mental health in any age is equally important to lead a happy and contented life. But how this happiness and contentment can be achieved? This is not anything that we can ask from others. It comes from within oneself. Literature of any language and place plays crucial role to understand the emotions and feelings one may go through.

The literary world offers a great deal of solution for every possible human problem. We only need an unbiased approach towards literature. In India there are many ancient literary works available. The most significant and holy book entitled *Bhagavad Gita* is well-known to offer the answers to ones questions. It is believed that if one is seeking to find mental peace one must read *Bhagavad Gita*. Many western authors had deciphered the ancient Indian work and found it most consoling and soothing text. This research paper is a humble attempt to comprehend the *Karma Yoga* described in *Bhagavad Gita* and how the understanding of the concept makes survival easy for mankind.

Many Western scholars and writers were influenced by the Indian thought of philosophy and spirituality. T. S. Eliot is the most significant name among them. He in his influential works had used allusions from *Bhagavad Gita*. Other notable name is Aldous Huxley, he found *Bhagavad Gita* “the most systematic statement of spiritual evolution of endowing value to mankind.” Huxley also says, it is “one of the most clear and comprehensive summaries of perennial philosophy ever revealed; hence its enduring value is subject not only to India but to all of humanity.”

The first prime minister of India Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru says, “The Bhagavad Gita deals essentially with the spiritual foundation of human existence. It is call of action to meet the obligations and duties of life; yet keeping in view the spiritual nature and grander purpose of the universe.” According to Wilhelm Von Humboldt it is “The most beautiful, perhaps the only true philosophical song existing in any known tongue.”

The *Bhagavad Gita* is a discourse between Arjuna and Lord Krishna. It was delivered before the onset of war when Arjuna was in the state of confusion, he was stuck between the right and the wrong and he decided not to participate in war. Lord Krishna imparts the most secret knowledge with his cousin and disciple Arjuna.

To understand the *Karma Yoga* first we must consider the word *Dharma*. The word is derived from the Sanskrit word *dhr* which means ‘to hold’ or ‘to support’. According to ancient *Varna System* the society was divided into four classes i.e. *Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras*. The Brahmins are designated as the religious teachers, priests and scholars. *Kshatriyas* were the rulers, warriors and administrators. *Vaishyas* were the agriculturalists and merchant. And the *shudras* were the labourers and service providers of the other classes. These were the different classes with their prescribed duties. One must behave according to their social status and that was the *Dharma* of them.

When Arjuna was distressed and giving up weapons Krishna says,

“*Sva-dharmam api caveksya na vikampitum arhasi*

Dharmyad dhi yuddhac chreyo 'nyat ksatriyasya na vidyate. (31, 103)”

Arjuna was advised to consider his duty as a *Kshatriya*; he was further told that there is nothing better than to fight for a religious purpose. So he must not hesitate in doing so because for *Kshatriya* it is the soul duty to fight against any misdoing and protect people from injustice. Lord Krishna further says if he would not perform his duty, his inaction will bring defamation for him as a fighter. People for generations will speak about his inaction and cowardice. And “dishonor is worse than death (106)” for a respectable member of society. Lord Krishna was pushing Arjuna to perform his duty by suggesting him that if he will not fight with his enemies that will dishonour him. They may also propose that Arjuna left the battlefield out of fear. And they might use unkind words about his ability to stand against them.

Moreover if he decides to participate he will either be killed or defeat his enemies, hence he must fight. Krishna says, “fight for the sake of fighting, without considering happiness or distress, loss or gain, victory or defeat (108).”

It can be understood by the example of a teacher. The prescribed duty of a teacher is to instruct and impart knowledge to his pupils. And when he does these moral and intellectual teachings he must not consider the cast, race or gender of his pupils. Dronacharya was the teacher of Pandus and Kauravas. A tribal boy Eklavya requested to Dronacharya for accepting him as his disciple to teach him the magnificent art of Archery. Dronacharya replied that if Eklavya is a tribal hunter, he must be a *Shudra*, and being a Brahmin, Drona cannot teach the lowest social community. In this way he declines his duty as a teacher which brought him dishonour.

Krishna says to Arjuna, “you have a right to perform your prescribed duty, but you are not entitled to the fruits of your actions. Never consider yourself the cause of the results of your activities (120).” This is the most vital teaching of *Karma* or action. Krishna further explains, “Abandoning all attachment to success or failure, such equanimity is called *Yoga* (121).” The practice of this *Yoga* may help to be content in whatever circumstances one may fall into. When one finds satisfaction in oneself, he does not need any materialistic and sensory pleasures, but he is obligated to perform his duties. The one who is indifferent attains the transcendental consciousness. Krishna says, “A person who is not disturbed by the incessant flow of desires – that enter like rivers into the ocean, which is ever being filled but is always still – can alone achieve peace, and not the man who strives to satisfy such desires (140).”

When a man attains the godly and spiritual life he is not bewildered. That consciousness comes from surrender yourself and offer all your actions into the hands of supreme power. In this material world everyone acts according to their acquired potentials and faculty, no one can escape from doing something, not even for an instant.

A sincere person tries to control the active senses by the mind and begins “Karma Yoga without attachment” is far more superior. One cannot even maintain the physical health without work; the body will be diseased or fall ill without work. So this piece of advice, to follow the path of total self-surrender in hands of supreme power when one finds the path of knowledge and action difficult to follow, is worth accepting for mental and physical health. This *Karma Yoga* can be practiced for a more balanced life by which one can enjoy their existence without losing one’s mental peace. It teaches us only perform our duties with complete detachment hence no offence can be felt.

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