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## The Essence of Action: Karmayog and Karmasanyasyog Discourses in the Bhagavad Gita

**Abstract:** Geeta a revered scripture of ancient India, provides profound insights into the paths of action and renunciation. This abstract explores the essence of these teachings, examining their relevance and application in contemporary life.

**Key Words:** Karmayog, Selflessness.

### Article Information

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### Introduction

Karmayog, often translated as the "Yoga of Action," emphasizes the performance of one's duties with detachment from the results. It teaches that actions should be carried out selflessly, without attachment to personal gain or outcomes. Lord Krishna, the divine charioteer, elucidates this path to Arjuna, urging him to fulfill his warrior duties without hesitation. In this discourse, the Gita emphasizes the importance of performing one's duties diligently, recognizing them as offerings to the greater good rather than mere personal endeavors.

On the other hand, Karmasanyasyog, or the "Yoga of Renunciation," presents a contrasting path. It advocates detachment from worldly desires and responsibilities, urging individuals to withdraw from the material world and seek spiritual.

realization. This path is exemplified by a renunciant lifestyle, where one relinquishes worldly possessions and attachments to focus solely on the pursuit of spiritual knowledge and liberation.

The Bhagavad Gita, however, does not present these paths as mutually exclusive. Instead, it harmonizes the seemingly divergent paths of action and renunciation, highlighting their

complementary nature. Lord Krishna emphasizes that both paths ultimately lead to the same goal of self-realization and liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

In the modern context, the teachings of Karmayog and Karmasanyasyog offer valuable lessons for navigating the complexities of life. Karmayog reminds individuals to engage in their responsibilities and roles with dedication and integrity, fostering a sense of duty towards society. It encourages individuals to perform their tasks with excellence while letting go of attachment to personal gains, thus reducing stress and anxiety related to outcomes.

Conversely, Karmasanyasyog serves as a reminder to pause and reflect on the transient nature of material pursuits. In a world often driven by consumerism and ambition, this path offers a counterbalance by emphasizing the importance of inner peace and spiritual growth. It encourages individuals to find contentment within themselves rather than in external possessions or achievements.

**Introduction:** Renunciation of deeds and Karmayoga both bring ultimate welfare, but among these two, Karmayoga is better than renunciation of deeds. Another specialty of Karma Marga as compared to Sanyas Marga is that Sanyas Marga emphasizes on personal liberation. There, the path of action is a means of collective salvation, hence its supporters say that after attaining knowledge, there is no work left for a person to do for his own welfare. On the contrary, although the Karmayogi has no duty to fulfill his own interests, yet he does our worldly work for the welfare of the people. From this it becomes clear that in Shrimad Bhagwat Geeta, Karmayoga has been given superiority over the path of renunciation. The main idea of Karmayoga is that to call any action as duty-non-duty, right-wrong or auspicious or bad, one has to look at it rather than the external results of the action. It is necessary whether the sensual intellect of the subject is pure or impure. But the purity of lustful intellect is also decided by the professional intellect. Therefore, unless the decision-making intellect is calm, even lust cannot be pure and even. Our spiritual experience also shows that the intellect of people who are busy in attaining pleasures in work always wanders. Kamya Karmas are called fruitful deeds. Sakama Karma refers to the actions having attachment to the results. Therefore, Shri Krishna clearly states that man has the right only in the work he does, never in its results. Therefore, there should never be a reason for the result of action, nor should there be attachment to the action. This idea of Geeta is very serious which clarifies the central idea of Geeta.

Now an important question arises here that why it is said in Geeta that a person has the right only in doing the work and not in its fruits and results. The reason for this is that it is fundamentally wrong to understand that the results we get for any of our actions are the result of our actions only. For example, if the fluidity of water and the heat of fire are not available,

then human efforts alone cannot achieve purity. The presence or absence of these properties in fire etc. is not in the control of man. This is the reason why it is necessary for human behavior to acquire as much knowledge as possible before undertaking these various predetermined activities of creation. In this way, the result or result of the karma is dependent on both the human action and the corresponding conditions of the universe, for the success of the karma, sometimes man does not have the exact knowledge of the corresponding conditions of the universe and sometimes it is not even possible to have them. This is called God. That is why it is said in Geeta that man should not become the cause of the consequences of his actions. But becoming the cause of the result does not mean that we do not pay proper attention to the action plan itself. According to the nature of the karma, the doer will have to pay attention to some results, because those results are part of the karma. Performing a particular action and bringing about one or more consequences accordingly is a logically related business. For example, when someone is cooking food, one has to pay attention to whether the food is cooked properly or not. Not only this, planning will have to be done keeping the results in mind.

Every human being must know that his actions will have some result or outcome. But along with this knowledge, he must also have such a desire that he wants to perform a certain action only by making a certain kind of plan to get a certain result, otherwise all his actions will prove to be useless like those of madmen and aimless people. From the above verse. It can be simply interpreted that one should not desire or expect karmic results. He should concentrate only on his work. But this interpretation does not seem appropriate because every action of a human being appears to be associated with such things in the form of results, paying attention to which is necessary for the wise execution of the action. In reality, such results are not external to the karma but are inherent in the karma itself. For example, if a teacher desires or expects these results in the context of teaching, that his students understand the subject properly and complete its syllabus in the stipulated time and hence the teacher pays attention to some specific types of results, then this teacher's This kind of result-oriented attitude should not conflict with the teachings of the verses of Srimad Bhagavad Gita. This type of attitude proves that the doer is performing his/her actions wisely and is not paying attention to any result other than the action. In order for the action to be deliberate, the doer has to pay attention to those things, the doer can desire to get those results. The intention of Srimad Bhagavad Gita actually appears to be that the person should neither desire those results, nor Attention should be given to those things which are external to the action from the point of view of judicious performance of the action. For example, the act of reading should not be given due attention by the teacher to the results that the students will praise him for his teaching and he will be promoted, in this way the mind

will be guided by the principles of Gita. There will definitely be opposition to the presented idea in the Gita. In the context of war, the consequences about which Arjuna is shown to be concerned are the enjoyment of the kingdom, the slaughter of his own community, victory and defeat, etc., are the consequences of the judicious conduct of the war. From the point of view, it is external to the action, therefore, the mentality that makes the external results of the action a subject, not only hinders the edification but also hinders the spiritual progress of the person due to being akin to an uncontrolled mind. In this sense, the power of fruition has been said to be discarded, not in the sense of that consequential attitude which is indispensable for the judicious performance of action.

Now we will try to analyse in depth the nature of Karmayoga of Shrimad Bhagavad Gita by looking at it in the context of Karma Sannyasa. In the Gita, till the fourth chapter, Shri Krishna sometimes praises Karmayoga and sometimes renunciation of karma, in such a situation it is natural for Arjun to be confused. That Arjun who was already getting distraught with the melancholy of attachment. Therefore, at the beginning of Chapter Five, Arjun naturally asked the question that between the two paths of Karmayoga and Sankhya, decide which path is the best and tell me. When Arjuna asks this question, Shri Krishna clearly answers that both renunciation and karmayoga are the means of salvation. In other words, they are of equal merit from the point of view of salvation. Still, the superiority of Karmayoga is special among them. In Gita Bhashya, Shankar says that in reality, Shri Krishna praises Karmayoga because of the superiority of Karmayoga over mere renunciation without knowledge. Even in Ramanujabhasya, this verse is considered to praise Karmayoga. In the opinion of Ramanujacharya, devotion is the main thing to be achieved and whether one is on the path of knowledge or on the path of devotion, Karmayoga is the only means to achieve all these. According to Tilak, Karmayoga can never be a precursor to the path of renunciation because in this path karma is never left behind. It is clearly said in Geeta that after attaining knowledge there can be no bondage of selfless deeds. However, the salvation that is achieved through renunciation can also be achieved through this Karmayoga.

Even more important than the mutual independence of Karmayoga and Karmasanyas, the question posed by Shri Krishna's answer to Arjuna is that which of these two paths is superior. If both these paths were of equal value then it would not have been possible for Shri Krishna to tell Arjuna that Arjuna should only fight the war, because then Arjuna could have decided that if these two paths were equal, then even if I follow my own interest, Should I fight the war accordingly or should I leave the bonds of my family and take up renunciation? This is the reason why the writer of the song had to prove through Shri Krishna that Karmayoga is better

than Sannyasa. What is meant by Karma Sanyas is that after attaining the knowledge of the Supreme Truth i.e. God, a wise person should completely give up Karma. 'Karmayoga' propounded by Srimad Bhagavad Gita means that after attaining the knowledge of God, one should continue to work selflessly even after attaining the ultimate goal of salvation.

Geetakar has mainly given two reasons in favor of declaring Karmayoga as superior to Karma Sanyasa, firstly, Karma is inevitable. Therefore, even after gaining knowledge, it is impossible to give up all the deeds. Secondly, from the point of view of public gathering, appropriate actions are expected to be performed. Apart from these two reasons, one reason can also be thought that Karma Sanyas i.e. the path of pure knowledge is also difficult for most of the people because very few people have the determination to follow this path. Arjun was a warrior, not a wise man. Therefore, it is also natural that Krishna, after telling Arjun about both the paths of Karma Sanyas and Karma Yoga, presented Karma Yoga as the best of the two.

The similar nature of Karmayoga and Karmasanyasayoga described in Srimad Bhagavad Gita has been described in this way, due to which both these paths are said to be similar or give similar results, the main points of which are as follows.

**Law of Karma:** The Bhagavad Gita explains the fundamental law of karma, which states that every action has consequences. It emphasizes that individuals are responsible for their actions and will inevitably face the fruits of those actions, whether in this life or in future incarnations.

**Selfless Action:** The Gita encourages individuals to perform their duties and responsibilities (dharma) without attachment to the outcomes. This selfless approach to action is known as Nishkama Karma. Krishna advises Arjuna to act selflessly, dedicating the results of his actions to the divine.

**Detachment from Results:** Krishna teaches the importance of detachment from the results of one's actions. He emphasizes that individuals should not be motivated by desires for success, rewards, or personal gain, as such desires lead to bondage and suffering.

**Equanimity:** The Gita promotes equanimity, advising individuals to maintain mental balance and equanimity in the face of success and failure, pleasure and pain. This balanced approach to life helps one navigate the ups and downs with grace.

**Renunciation and Action:** The Gita reconciles the seemingly contradictory paths of renunciation (Sannyasa) and active engagement in the world (Karma Yoga). It suggests that one can attain spiritual realization through dedicated action performed with the right attitude.

**Yoga of Selfless Action:** The Bhagavad Gita introduces the concept of Karma Yoga, which is the path of selfless action. It involves dedicating one's actions to the divine, serving others

without attachment, and seeking spiritual growth through fulfilling one's duties and responsibilities.

**Freedom and Liberation:** By understanding and practicing karma in the right way, individuals can attain liberation (moksha) from the cycle of birth and death (samsara). The Gita teaches that selfless action, performed with devotion and a sense of duty, can lead to spiritual realization and ultimate freedom.

In summary, the Bhagavad Gita offers profound insights into the concept of karma and provides guidance on how to live a life of purpose, responsibility, and spiritual growth while remaining detached from the outcomes of one's actions. It emphasizes the importance of selfless action and the cultivation of a balanced and equanimous mind as key steps toward spiritual liberation.

**Conclusion:** The essence of Karmayog and Karmasanyasyog as expounded in the Bhagavad Gita lies in their ability to guide individuals towards a balanced and meaningful life. Whether through active engagement with responsibilities or contemplative withdrawal for spiritual reflection, these paths offer timeless wisdom for seekers of truth and fulfillment.

Through this exploration, we come to understand that the essence of action, as taught in the Bhagavad Gita, lies not merely in the external deeds themselves but in the attitude and intention with which they are performed. It invites individuals to embrace a mindset of selflessness, duty, and spiritual awareness, ultimately leading to a life of purpose and harmony.

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