

KARMYOGA AND ITS IMPLICATIONS IN EDUCATION

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Abstract

Lord Krishna unfolded the doctrine of Karmyoga to Arjuna in the battlefield. It consists of performing one's prescribed duties as per social, moral and constitutional codes of a country with utmost dedication but without any attachment with the results of actions. For this establishment of oneself in equanimity (selflessness) is a pre-requisite. This will lead to 100% participation in one's duty. The duty could be in educational or any other professional sphere. The foundation of karmyoga lies in utmost dedication towards duty, responsibility and selfless service. Dedication to teaching by teachers coupled with dedication to learning by students will result into development of excellent centres of education.

Key words : *karmyoga, dedication, selfless actions, equanimity*

Introduction:

Action means something done. Before we do any action there is a desire, an intention or urge in our mind to do the action. This shows that our body is motivated to act by our desires. Our mind is never at rest and is consistently making desires. It is also our experience that all our desires cannot be met. Thus the sages and saints stress to be desireless. Bhagvad Gita, an important treatise on Hindu philosophy is replete with teaching of desireless actions (Swami Ram Sukh Dass, 2005). But how is it possible to remain in a desireless state while performing actions? It is a great paradox or puzzle which the author has tried to solve. The implications of desireless actions especially in education are also discussed.

Background of desire less actions

When we go through Bhagvad Gita, it becomes evident that Arjuna, great warrior (Kshtriya) got perplexed and confused due to duality of his mind. He was reluctant to fight rather he preferred not to fight. He believed that war amounts to killings and killing is a sinful act (Gita, 1/36) which would render him to hell (Bhagvad Gita, 1/45). In contrast, as a warrior, it was his prescribed duty to fight against the evils in the society. He was also suffering from attachment with his close kith and kin whom he had to fight against. As a result, he was in a great dilemma as to what to do.

Advent of desire less actions(Karmyoga)

When Lord Krishna saw such a dual condition of Arjuna he thought it worthwhile to unfold the secret of karmyoga. The Lord states that It is not the act of war which is responsible for sinful act but your intentions associated with the results of war (Bhagvad Gita, 2/38). One should do ones duty maybe even war, but maintaining a yogic state (Yogsth kuru karmani...) as suggested in 2/49 verse of Bhagvad Gita. This yogic state does not imply that one should be expert in performing breathing (pranayama) exercises only. The yogic state is the state of mind and any action done in such a state whether it is war or killings, would not yield to any sin.

The equanimous or yogic state can be attained only when the soul of an individual is attached with God (higher conscious). God is characterized by eternity, truth, knowledge, blissfulness and abundance of peace and sufficiency (Bhagvad Gita 15/7). A person in a blissful state is hardly affected by the external circumstances of war (winning or losing) as his mind is already stationed in peace or abundance and does not do anything. He is full of energy and does his duty with 100% responsibility and 100% participation. In other words we can say that 100% input in work means 100% output from that work.

Description of Karmyoga

It consists of four steps (Bhagvad Gita, 2/47)

- 1) Performing ones prescribed duties with full responsibility as per the social, moral and constitutional code of a country.
- 2) No attachment or abhorrence with the results of actions. It means that one should neither become the sufferer nor enjoyer of fruits of his actions. The happiness of the karmyogi does not depend on external sources. A person working in such a state does service to others, he is infact, a real renouncer (samnyasi) as he is free from bondage of results of his actions (2/38). All his deeds are oriented to help others. Non-enjoyment of the fruits of actions also dissolves the ego of doership.

- 3) Not considering oneself as the cause for the fruits of his actions. The cause means taking credit for the positive result of one's actions. A person feels that if something positive has happened it is only due to his efforts. This implies that one should feel himself as non-doer (egoless). In another verse (Bhagvad Gita 18/17) Lord Krishna shows that the desire to fight or not to fight arises from false ego. In other words, ego of doership is false as the ego takes the credit of others. The hand shoots an arrow but ego takes credit that it is doing the action. When a person feels that he is a non-doer (akarmi), even though, he kills but does not kill in the views of Lord. Nor is he bound by the results of his actions whether positive or negative.

It could be clarified further by an example. When a soldier kills his enemy under the command of his commanding officer, he is not subject to judgement. On the contrary, when he kills without any orders, or with self-interest, then the soldier is subject to judgement by the court of law. The karmyogi always works with selfless interest as a matter of duty under the dictates of his Supreme God.

4. Inaction: Arjuna was resorting to inaction when he saw that he would have to kill his own clansmen. The Lord cautioned Arjuna against shirking from his duties or responsibilities. The man cannot become actionless by leaving actions altogether. This is because the mental currents always create actions and the person who refrains himself from the visible actions of body, is in fact deceiving himself. As such, inaction breeds lethargy in the society. Inaction amounts to negligence of one's duty and cannot be tolerated in a progressive society.

Karmyoga changes the mind set from selfishness to selflessness. The working of a karmyogi becomes effortless. That man is great who works with unattached mind without expecting the fruits of actions. And to act is better than inaction as body is given for the purpose of action (Bhagvad Gita 3/1, 4, 6, 7,8).

The karmyogi could be equated with an employee of an organization (Swami, 2003). The employee works without any rights of ownership on the materials or furniture which he uses in office. Likewise, this world is a big organization where we work but do not own anything as we can not take anything from here with us after death. The body (along with working and sensory organs) and intelligence are given to us as gifts for their proper use that is for service purpose. It could be mentioned that service of body is considered service if we do not own it. Ownership actually nullifies the positive results of service. The actions done in the method of a karmyogi lead to immense peace and freedom from bondage of actions. (Bhagvad Gita 4/23) This peace results in dissociation from the world. Karmyogi does actions to

purify his soul by removing its coverings. The karmyoga deals with two parts, one is karma (actions) and other is yoga. A karmyogi performs actions to serve or help others, The serving attitude without self-interest results in detachment from the results of actions and in turn gives peace. This peace itself transforms into eternal entity, experiencing soul or God(yoga). On the other hand, a common man works to get something and gets so absorbed so much in his work that he loses his peace.

Implications of Karmyoga in Education

Education is not something which is confined to bookish knowledge but it covers the overall development of an individual. Karmyoga can play a great role in the development of personalities of students so much so that they become responsible citizens.

1. Dedication to duty

Lord Krishna while delivering the discourses on karmyoga to Arjuna reveals that for the first time. He gave this knowledge to Lord Sun (Bhagvad Gita, 4/1-3). Since that time, the sun is doing his duty without any break and any expectation in return. In fact, sun, rivers, rains, air, plants and every form of nature are all doing self-less service of creation and infact the creation is sustaining on their service. The students should take this lesson from sun and all other forms of nature and become dedicated in their studies. The teachers should also be fully dedicated to their duty. In an organization, where dedication is of the highest order, such organizations will become the centres of excellence in education.

2. Self-less service

Real service is always self-less. The service with expectation is a business and bargain. A person who does not require any name or fame out of actions can do real service, the teachers should serve the students by giving excellent education to students without expecting anything from them. Likewise, students should learn with utmost dedication and give due respect to their teachers without expecting any appreciation. Similarly, parents should nourish their children with up-to-date educational facilities without expecting their children to take care of them in old age. Likewise the children should obey and serve their parents without demanding anything.

The educational institutes, where all the faculty members are dedicated towards their work are like heaven on earth and the homes where all the members have a serving attitude without expecting anything from others are the same too. It is the expectation from others which leads to problems and miseries

3.Mode of working of a karmyogi

A common man works with selfish interest. He has a taking concept as he operates from body level, in other words, from a lacking state. While a karmyogi operates from soul level, i.e. sufficiency level. The mode of operation makes a lot of difference. The very act of giving becomes enlightening. One will go to his place of work not to take but to contribute or give to others and provide enjoyment to others. A karmyogi student attends to learn and in return contributes to his nation in return. He works in freedom and is not caught in the results. His action is action oriented and not result oriented. A common man works under compulsion while a karmyogi wants to bring happiness to his home. He knows his responsibilities towards family, society and nation. He lives in the present moment as he does not depend upon future results.

Now a days one is aware of his rights but not his duties. This is something that all of us should know. A person doing his duty sincerely indirectly protects the rights of others (Table1), for instance, if students are sincere and dedicated to learning, they protect the rights of teachers as the teachers also want their students to be sincere and obedient. Likewise, the teachers should do their teaching with full dedication. By this way, they protect the rights of students who also want that they should be given excellent education. This shows ones duty protects the rights of others. By this rights of all the persons will be protected and peace would prevail everywhere.

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that there is an urgent need to preach the philosophy of desire less action (Karmyoga) so that dedication to duty and serving attitude becomes our motto of life. This will help in the progress of an individual an in turn of society and nation as a whole.

Table 1
Dependence of Rights on the Duties

Status	Duty	Right
Student	It is the duty of the students to be dedicated in studies.	It is right of teachers that their students are sincere and dedicated.
Teacher	It is the duty of teachers to be dedicated to teaching.	It is the right of students that their teachers are dedicated.
Parents	It is the duty of parents to provide excellent facilities	It is the right of children that their parents provide

	of education to their children.	them all the facilities.
Children	It is the duty of children to be obedient, hardworking and interested in studies	It is right of parents that their children are obedient, hardworking and sincere.
Employer	It is the duty of employer to provide congenial environment to his staff.	It is the right of staff that their employer provides them congenial environment to its staff.
Employees	It is the duty of the employees to do their duties with utmost dedication.	It is right of employer who wants his staff to be dedicated.
Husband	It is his duty to support his wife in all the matters of family life.	It is the right of wife that her husband supports her in all the matters of family life.
Wife	It is her duty to look after the interests of her husband.	It is the right of husband that his wife is supporting him.

References

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