

## Essence of Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, and Gyan Yoga in special reference of Srimad Bhagwad Geeta

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### Abstract:

The present study aims to find the views of Lord Krishna on Human excellence, in special reference of Karma, Bhakti and Gyan Yoga. Srimad Bhagawad Geeta is well known Upanishad and one of the greatest theme which is contributed by lord Krishna to the world, which is considered to be one of the first revelations from God. We can say it is the essence of Upanishads and a complete guide to practical life. It is highly significant for all mankind since it says, It provides “all that is needed to raise the consciousness of man to the highest possible level.” The world and India has seen several saints and prophets. When almost all of them talked about God. The main theme of this lecture was Human Excellence. He wanted every human being to manifest the best qualities in all spheres of life. The study concludes that the best examples of the karma, Bhakti and Gyan Yoga as Sri Krishna taught in Bhagwad Gita.

**Keywords:** KarmaYoga, Bhakti Yoga, GyanYoga, Srimad Bhagwad Geeta

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### Introduction:

The Srimad Bhagavad Gita is a dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjuna, narrated in the Bhishma Parva of the Mahabharata. It comprises eighteen discourses of a total of 701 Sanskrit verses. A considerable volume of material has been compressed within these verses. On the battlefield of Kurukshetra, Sri Krishna, during the course of His most instructive and interesting talk with Arjuna, revealed profound, sublime and soul-stirring spiritual truths, and expounded the rare secrets of Yoga, Vedanta, Bhakti and Karma.

All the teachings of Lord Krishna were subsequently recorded as the Song Celestial or Srimad Bhagavad Gita by Bhagavan Vyasa for the benefit of humanity at large. The world is under a great debt of gratitude to Bhagavan Vyasa who presented this Song Celestial to humanity for the guidance of their daily conduct of life, spiritual upliftment and Self-realisation. Those who are self-

controlled and who are endowed with faith can reap the full benefit of the Gita, which is the science of the Soul.

The *Gita* is the cream of the *Vedas*. It is the essence of the soul-elevating *Upanishads*. It is a universal scripture applicable to people of all temperaments and for all times. It is a wonderful book with sublime thoughts and practical instructions on Yoga, devotion, Vedanta and action. It is a marvellous book, profound in thought and sublime in heights of vision. It brings peace and solace to souls that are afflicted by the three fires of mortal existence, namely, afflictions caused by one's own body, those caused by beings around one, and those caused by the gods.

The *Bhagavad Gita* formulates the theories of the three paths without creating any conflict among them. It harmonises most wonderfully the philosophy of action, devotion and knowledge. All three must be harmoniously blended if you wish to attain perfection. You should have the head of

Sri Shankara, the heart of Lord Buddha and the hand of King Janaka. The three horses of this body-chariot—action, emotion and intellect—should work in perfect harmony. Only then will it move smoothly and reach the destination safely and quickly. Only then can you rejoice in the Self, sing the song of Soham, be in tune with the Infinite, hear the soundless voice of the Soul and enjoy the sweet music of the eternal Self.

### **The essence of action( Karma Yoga ):**

In order to remove Moha or attachment, which was the sole cause of Arjuna's delusion, Sri Krishna taught him the imperishable nature of the Atman, the realisation of which would grant him the freedom of the Eternal. Adoubt therefore arises in Arjuna's mind as to the necessity of engaging in action even after one has attained this state.

Sri Krishna clears this doubt by telling him that although one has realised oneness with the Eternal, one has to perform action through the force of Prakriti or Nature. He emphasises that perfection is attained not by ceasing to engage in action but by doing all actions as a divine offering, imbued with a spirit of non-attachment and sacrifice.

The man of God-vision, Sri Krishna explains to Arjuna, need not engage in action, as he has attained everything that has to be attained. He can be ever absorbed in the calm and immutable Self. But to perform action for the good of the world and for the education of the masses is no doubt superior. Therefore, action is necessary not only for one who has attained perfection but also for one who is striving for perfection. Sri Krishna quotes the example of Janaka, the great sage-king of India, who continued to rule his kingdom even after attaining God-realisation.

Prakriti or Nature is made up of the three qualities—Rajas, Tamas and Sattwa. The Atman is beyond these three qualities and their functions. Only when knowledge of this fact dawns in man does he attain perfection.

The Lord tells Arjuna that each one should do his duty according to his nature, and that doing duty that is suited to one's nature in the right spirit of detachment will lead to perfection.

Arjuna raises the question as to why man commits such actions that cloud his mind and drag him downwards, by force, as it were. Sri Krishna answers that it is desire that impels man to lose his discrimination and understanding, and thus commit wrong actions. Desire is the root cause of all evil actions. If desire is removed, then the divine power manifests in its full glory and one enjoys peace, bliss, light and freedom.

In spite of Sri Krishna's clear instructions, Arjuna still see ms to be bewildered. He wants to know conclusively which is superior, the path of action or the path of renunciation of action. The Lord says that both the paths lead to the highest goal of God-realisation. In both cases the final realisation of the Atman is the aim, but the path of Karma Yoga is superior. Actually there is no real difference between the two.

Krishna further asserts that perfection can be attained and one can be established in the Atman only after the mind has been purified through the performance of selfless action. The Karma Yogi who is aware of the Atman and who is constantly engaged in action knows that although the intellect, mind and senses are active, he does not do anything. He is a spectator of everything. He dedicates all his actions to the Lord and thus abandons attachment, ever remaining pure and unaffected. He surrenders himself completely to the Divine Shakti. Having completely rooted

out all desires, attachments and the ego, he is not born again.

The sage who has realised Brahman and is always absorbed in It does not have any rebirth. Such a sage sees Brahman within and without—within as the static and transcendent Brahman, and without as the entire universe. He sees the one Self in all beings and creatures—in a cow, an elephant, and even in a dog and an outcaste. He is ever free from joy and grief and enjoys eternal peace and happiness. He does not depend upon the senses for his satisfaction. On the other hand the enjoyments of the senses are generators of pain. They are impermanent. Sri Krishna reminds Arjuna that desire is the main cause of pain and suffering. It is the cause of anger. Therefore, the aspirant should try to eradicate desire and anger if he is to reach the Supreme.

The Lord concludes by describing how to control the senses, mind and intellect by concentrating between the eyebrows and practising Pranayama. One who has achieved perfect control of the outgoing senses and is freed from desire, anger and fear attains liberation and enjoys perfect peace.

#### **The essence of devotion ( Bhakti Yoga ):**

The twelfth discourse indicates that the path of devotion is easier than the path of knowledge. In this path the aspirant worships God in His Cosmic Form of the Supreme Personality. He develops a loving relationship with Him, adores Him, remembers Him and chants His glories and Name. He thus effects union with the Lord and attains not only His formless aspect but also the Lord as the manifest universe.

The path of knowledge, whereby the aspirant meditates on the formless Brahman, is more difficult as he has to give up his attachment to the body from the very beginning. He has to have dispassion for the things of the world.

How to practise devotion? Krishna asks Arjuna to fix his entire mind on Him. As often as the mind wanders it should be brought back to the Lord. If this process of concentration is difficult he should dedicate all his actions to Him, feeling that it is His power that activates everything. If this also is beyond his ability, he should offer all his actions to the Lord, abandoning the desire for their fruits. He should take complete refuge in Him. The devotee who surrenders himself to the Lord attains perfect peace.

The Lord goes on to describe the qualities that a true devotee possesses. He neither attaches himself to anything nor does he have any aversion to things. He has a balanced mind under all circumstances. He is not agitated by the happenings of the world, nor does he himself cause any agitation in others. He is perfectly desireless and rejoices in the Lord within. He sees equality everywhere, being untouched by sorrow, fear, honour as also dishonour. He is perfectly content as he has surrendered his entire being to the Lord.

#### **The essence of wisdom and realisation (Gyan Yoga):**

Sri Krishna tells Arjuna that the supreme Godhead has to be realised in both its transcendent and immanent aspects. The Yogi who has reached this summit has nothing more to know.

This complete union with the Lord is difficult of attainment. Among many thousands of human beings, very few aspire for this union, and even among those who aspire for it, few ever reach the pinnacle of spiritual realisation.

The Lord has already given a clear description of the all-pervading static and infinite state of His. Now He proceeds to explain His manifestations as the universe and the power behind it. He speaks of these manifestations as His lower and

higher Prakritis. The lower Prakriti is made up of the five elements, mind, ego and intellect. The higher Prakriti is the life-element which upholds the universe, activates it and causes its appearance and final dissolution.

Krishna says that whatever exists is nothing but Himself. He is the cause of the appearance of the universe and all things in it. Everything is strung on Him like clusters of gems on a string. He is the essence, substance and substratum of everything, whether visible or invisible. Although everything is in Him, yet He transcends everything as the actionless Self. Prakriti or Nature is made up of the three Gunas or qualities—Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas. These three qualities delude the soul and make it forget its true nature, which is one with God. This delusion, termed Maya, can only be removed by the Grace of the Lord Himself.

Thus far Arjuna has been taught the highest form of devotion, which leads to union with God in His static aspect as also with His dynamic Prakriti. Krishna tells him that there are also other forms of devotion which are inferior as they are performed with various motives. The distressed, the seeker of divine wisdom, and he who desires wealth, worship Him, as also the wise. Of these the Lord deems the wise as dearest to Him. Such a devotee loves the Lord for the sake of pure love alone. Whatever form the devotee worships, the ultimate goal is the Lord Himself. The Lord accepts such worship, knowing that it is directed to Him only.

### **Essence of the Geeta:**

The *Geeta* again and again emphasises that one should cultivate an attitude of non-attachment or detachment. It urges repeatedly that an individual should live in the world like water on a lotus leaf. “He

who does actions, offering them to Brahman and abandoning attachment, is not tainted by sin as a lotus leaf by water”—V/10.

Attachment is due to infatuation. It is the offspring of the quality of Rajas. Detachment is born of Sattwa. The former is a demoniacal attribute, the latter a divine one. Attachment is born of ignorance, selfishness and passion and brings with it death; detachment is wisdom and brings with it freedom. The practice of detachment is a rigorous discipline. You may stumble like a baby who is just learning to walk, but you will have to rise up again with a cheerful heart. Failures are not stumbling-blocks but steppingstones to success.

Try to dwell always in your own Self. Abide in your centre. Think of the Self constantly. Then all attachments will die automatically. Attachment to the Lord is a potent antidote to annihilate all worldly attachments. He who has no attachments can really love others, for his love is pure and divine. “Therefore, without attachment do thou always perform action which should be done; for, by performing action without attachment man reaches the Supreme”—III/19.

### **Conclusion:**

Gyan Yoga is the path of wisdom, knowledge and direct experience of Brahman as the ultimate reality. The path renounces both desires and actions, and is therefore depicted as being steep and very difficult in the Bhagavad Gita. This path is often associated with the non-dualistic Vedantic belief of the identity of the Ātman with the Brahman. For the followers of this path, the realisation of the identity of Ātman and Brahman is held as the key to liberation.

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