

Bagawat Geeta, Class 25

Shloka # 47:

“to work alone you have the right and never to the fruits (of works). Don't be impelled by the fruits of works; (at the same time) don't be tempted to withdraw from works.”

Swamiji continuing with his teaching says Sri Krishna now presents the principles of Karma Yoga in Shloka # 47.

We have free will and the will as to what action to take. We also have capacity to act as we have Karma Indriyani. We are not omnipotent to accomplish anything and everything but within the limited power, we can accomplish many things. The word Adhikara means we have a choice. So Arjuna, make use of the free will unique to humans. Free will is not available to animals that act out of instinct. It is this free will that allows us to accomplish our Purusarthas.

Puruṣārtha literally means an “object of human pursuit”. It is a key concept in Hinduism, and refers to the four proper goals or aims of a human life. The four **puruṣārthas** are:

- Dharma (righteousness, moral values)
- Artha (prosperity, economic values)
- Kama (pleasure, love, psychological values)
- Mokṣa (liberation, spiritual values).

Swamiji says Purushartha has two meanings. One is free will and another is a human goal. They are, however, interconnected. Thus, while dharma-arta-kama-mokṣa are all called purushartha, the effort that we put forth to accomplish them; that freewill, is also called puruṣartha.

You do not have a choice over results of your actions. This concept is often misinterpreted, says Swamiji. Thus, comes the interpretation that results are predestined, as such my effort

is not meaningful. God has determined everything beforehand. God also determines results. So, we are totally helpless. This is the fatalistic or deterministic approach and Swamiji says this interpretation is wrong.

Citing an example: Some companies advertise for job vacancies while they have already chosen somebody. This is used as eyewash. Similarly the fatalistic people think that even before we do the action or in spite of our action, the Lord already determined the result or destiny and therefore we are totally helpless. Swamiji says you cannot accept this fatalistic approach, as you cannot choose your result.

Sri Krishna does not mean our effort is in vain. All Karmas result in appropriate result (s). Sri Krishna says the result is , however, not determined by your effort alone. There are many other factors that contribute as well. Yours is only one of the contributing factors.

Another example cited was of a washer man who opened his business in a village. After some time he realized the village was a Digambara village.

Citing another example: We all attend this Vedanta class. I and other shishyas come because of the Guru. Guru comes because of the Shishyas. If there are no Shishyas then there is no Guru. Thus, our class has Students and Teacher as contributing factors. I am contributing to the class; however, I am not the only one contributing. Others are contributing factors as well. All these other factors together are known as fate or God's will.

Thus: My Free will + Fate (other contributing factors)=Result.

If you can predict all other contributing factors you can predict the result. Meteorologists try to predict weather where there are many variables. Thus, there are many factors. Some are known, some are unknown, some are controllable and some are uncontrollable. Hence, I can never predict the

result.

Swamiji says, “ Don’t make your happiness depend upon unpredictable factors. If you do so, your happiness will also be unpredictable. **Rather, you should focus on enjoying the performance of action itself.**”

This will be much more meaningful. If you play tennis, you enjoy the game. Result of the game is insignificant. In this process your health will also improve. **Make every action a great experience.**

Citing another example, Swamiji says, he took a group on tour to Amaranth. The lingam there is an ice lingam as such dependent on weather. Will we see the lingam or not, it was not sure. Our whole journey was wonderful, as we decided upfront whether we saw the lord or not was not important. There were complaints. In some instances there were no toilets to use. Nevertheless, it was a great journey because of the attitude we took to the journey.

Enjoy every action and internal growth will occur. Do not worry about the results or external accomplishments. “Inner growth” is in your hands. Outer result is not in your hands. Let not motive be focused on material gain, which is unpredictable. If material gain is the focus, life will be full of ups and downs. Focus should be on the very action that you are performing.

When I face a few failures one tends to become fatalistic. I want to avoid failure. So, you don’t attempt anything anymore. In this line of thinking, keep in mind, that this **Inaction** means you lose opportunity for inner growth. Sri Krishna describes this further in the 6th chapter.

Withdrawal also contributes to growth. However, keep in mind that, what “Activity” can contribute “Withdrawal” cannot contribute. In its initial stages of spiritual growth, action alone helps, as in Grihastha-ashrama. Later in life,

Vanaprastha, or withdrawal, helps. Action is most important. Withdrawal is only of secondary importance.

Shloka 48:

“Giving up attachment and established in Yoga, with evenness of mind in success and failure, perform works, O Arjuna. This evenness is Yoga. “

Have a proper attitude towards material gain. It should be subservient to inner growth. Material gain or loss will not then result in turmoil of mind. Samsara loses its capacity to disturb you.

Adopt a different attitude to life. Learn lessons from failures.

That is why even though ten people failed in a particular field, all the people were not uniformly agitated. One person thought of committing suicide. Second person was disturbed and could not sleep; however a third person said failure is a part of life and I have learnt a good lesson. The third person's approach indicates inner maturity.

Citing example of the executive who was very successful.

They interviewed him and asked; what is the secret of your success. And he said, Right Decision. And then they asked the question; what is the secret of your Right Decision? He said experience in life. What is the secret of your experience in life; He said, wrong decisions. Therefore, even though you may consider it as a wrong decision, it is just an experience.

This mental balance is called Samatvam. One who values inner growth has Samatvam. In prosperity and adversity great people enjoy mental balance. Example of the rising sun was cited.

When the Sun is rising, it is bloody in color and when the sun is about to set, it is also bloody. Often, when you get a picture of the Sun, you will not know whether it is a rising

Sun or setting Sun. Be like the Sun, ups and downs will come.

Main indicator of a Karma Yogi is his mental balance. Do your duty or work with mental balance. There is no risk- less action. There is also no risk- less life. Yet maintain mental balance. Shift your attachment from “material growth” to “Inner or spiritual growth”. It is an attachment that is permitted by the Shastras. Be equanimous, in both success and failure.

Definition of Karma Yoga: It is a particular state of mind.

Shloka # 49:

“ Work impelled by the desire for fruit is indeed far inferior, evenness of mind being far above it. O Arjuna, Take refuge in the evenness of intelligence. Pitiful are those impelled by the desire for the fruits of works.”

Here Sri Krishna is contrasting two types of people, a Karmi and a Karma Yogi.

Karmi is a materialistic person who does not value inner growth. People die of failure as well as success.

The materialist gets kicked both in success and failure, at both extremes, and therefore he suffers; whereas a Karma Yōgi is one who is balanced both in success and failure;

Karma of a materialist is far inferior to the Karma yoga (Budhi yoga) of a Karma Yogi. Main focus of Karma Yoga is on the value or attitude towards action and not on the action itself; hence it also called Budhi Yoga.

Therefore, Arjuna, resort to Karma Yoga. Cultivate proper attitude. Those who do not have this attitude (Karmi's), they are unfortunate. They go through a lot of stress, strain and anxiety in life.

Shloka # 50:

“With the intelligence of evenness one discards (in this world) both good and evil works (i.e the merits and demerits of works). Therefore strive to secure this Yoga; Yoga is skill in works.”

Here Sri Krishna points out results of Karma Yoga. One who has a proper attitude, a clear visioned person, a Karma Yogi; he will ultimately become a Gyana Yogi. He alone analyses life experiences and will realize that he wants permanent happiness.

I am seeking happiness and fulfillment from material or finite things, a path which is useless. He will realize this and come to gyana yoga. Then, he will transcend all Karma Phalas by discovering his Atma Swaroopa. He then gives up happiness and sorrow.

Thus: Karma Yoga>Gyana Yoga> Gyanam> Moksha.

Living as a Karmi you will just keep going round and round in the chain of life and death.

May you take to Karma Yoga. It is the efficient performance of action or “Skill in action”.

With Best wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy