KARMA- YOGA IN BHAGAVAD-GITA

CHAPTER IV

KARMA-YOGA IN BHAGAVAD-GĪTA

Srimad Bhagavad-Gītā or 'The Song Celestial' occupies a unique place in the religious literature of India. It forms part of the Great Sanskrit Epic Mahābhārata. The Gīta with its 18 chapters and 700 verses, occupies the Bhīṣma Parvan of the great Epic. The relation of Bhagavad-Gītā to Mahābhārata is co-equal with that of Upaniṣads to Vedas. Bhagavad-Gītā is believed to be the quintessence of the whole of Vedic teaching. Sri. Sankaracharya in his commentary on the Bhagavad-Gītā had brought out the same idea that Gīta-Śāstra is an epitome of the essentials of the whole Vedic teaching.

Bhagavad-Gītā has been described by its composer Vyāsa as the Upaniṣad dealing with Yoga-Śāstra and also as the Science of the Absolute or Brahma-Vidya, for it deals both with ethics and metaphysics. Thus it is a Science of Reality and the Art of Union with Reality. The Gīta is understood to be the 'Upaniṣad of the Upaniṣads', where in Sri Krishna had drawn the milk of the Upaniṣads which were later given in the form of the Gīta, meant for the welfare of the humanity. The following popular verse from Vaisnāvīyatatantrasāra had
brought out the same point in which the *Upaniṣads* were compared to the cows, Sri Krishna as the milker, Arjuna as the calf, and the *Gīta* as the milk.

'Sarvopaniṣad gāvo dodgha gopālanandanah

Partha Vatsah Sudhir bhokta dugdham Gītaṁtam mahat'

The *Bhagavad Gīta* stands for the teaching of Lord Krishna to Arjuna. The setting for the teaching of this holy treatise is the battlefield of *kurukṣetra* also known as *Dharmakṣetra*, in which the two forces of *Dharma* and *Adharma* were fighting against each other. At the very outset we find Arjuna had been worried at the thought that he had to fight against his own people. Arjuna said,

"Seeing these kinsmen, O Krishna, arrayed and desirous to fight, my limbs droop down, any my mouth is dried up. A tremor comes on my body and my hairs stand on end".¹

Arjuna refused to fight and said that he would liked to be killed by his enemies rather than killing them. Sri Krishna, who happened to be the chariotor of Arjuna advises him to fight for it is the duty of a *kṣhatriya* to fight when occasion demands it.

"Having regard to thine own duty also, thou oughtst not to waver. For to a kṣhatriya, there is nothing more whole-some than a lawful battle".²

In the battlefield of kurushetra Arjuna experienced intense agony and had lost the sense of discrimination (Viveka) by irrational impulses. It was nothing but his attachment to his own people that made him blind to discharge his duties as a kṣhatriya. Arjuna overwhelmed with grief and in utter helpless seeks instruction from the Lord Arjuna said,

"My heart contaminated by the taint of helplessness, my mind confounded about Dharma, I ask thee: Tell me what is absolutely good. I am thy pupil: Instruct me, who have sought thy grace".³

The central teaching of the Gīta is mainly intended to inspire Arjuna to action. As stated earlier the Bhagavad-Gīta has been described as a discourse on Yoga-Śāstra or the Science of Absolute. The main theme of the Gīta is understood to be the flight of the soul towards God. The Gīta-Śāstra in the main, is the science of Supreme Bliss. The Gīta dispels the soul from its dilemmas and opens up new vistas for the aspirant towards the abode of God. Sri Krishna, Arjuna’s
Guru, guide and friend instructs him to dispel all his weaknesses. The Lord condemned Arjuna's feeble mindedness. This underlies the very core of Gīta teaching and forms a necessary pre-requisite for fruitful sādhana. The teacher student discussion (samvāda) laid the foundation of this sādhana. The Gīta starts with the Yoga of Arjuna's despondency wherein he is overwhelmed with grief and dejection. The Bhagavad-Gīta gives an elaborate account of the science of Yoga. It starts with the Yoga of Despondency or Viṣhāda.

In the Bhagavad-Gīta, Viṣhāda does not mean worldly unhappiness as it is ordinarily understood to be. It signifies a state of mind in which the initial despondency paves the way for higher spiritual wisdom. The Lord instructs Arjuna to dispel his despondency and prepares him to receive higher spiritual truths for sustained release from Samsara. It proceeds through the awakening of the inner psyche through strict adherence to the practice of Yoga which prepares the aspirant to receive the supreme wisdom of Brahma-Vidya which dispels all false knowledge.

"Of the unreal no being there is, there is no non-being of the real. Of both these the truth seen by the seer of the Essence" 4
The following verses give an idea as to what is real. The Lord said:

"But know that to be, imperishable by which all this is pervaded. None can cause the destruction of that, the inexhaustible." 5

Arjuna's despondency thus is not a more psychological crisis, but it is the craving of the mind for higher spiritual wisdom.

Being a Yoga-Śāstra, the word 'Yoga' gives the clue to the understanding of the central message of this Divine Treatise. Its primary meaning is 'Union'. It is a process or discipline leading to oneness with the Divine. Secondarily Yoga signifies the 'path' or the 'way' leading to Divine realisation. Many are the ways expounded and pursued in Traditional Indian Philosophy and Religion for Divine realisation. The author of the Gītā recognises all these different paths but took extra care to explain and evaluate them in the light of the total picture of man's spiritual quest. The Bhagavad-Gītā recommends different Yogas for Divine realisation. But primarily Gītā is considered to be the Gospel of work or the Gospel of Karma-Yoga. It is a practical means for the attainment of higher spiritual ends.
Primarily Gītā is understood to be a Treatise on Niṣkāma-Yoga or the Gospel of disinterested interest which is also known as disinterested action or sādhanā of work. S. Radhakrishnanan consider Gītā "as a mandate for action"6.

The Bhagavad-Gītā is a comprehensive Treatise on the Gospel of Action or Karma. In the context of the Gītā, Karma is not merely physical action but includes thought as well. It is not the mere mechanical performance of outward actions. It is the result of proper deliberation and choice at will. Karma or action is different from the Karma-Yoga or 'Yoga of Action'. Karma-Yoga is one of the oldest and most widely accepted practice meant for the realisation of the ultimate goal of life. Actions performed for the enjoyment of worldly pleasures is Karma. Whereas actions performed in the spirit of disinterestedness is Karma-Yoga. Karma-Yoga is not renunciation of action but renunciation in action. According to the Gītā teaching, Wisdom is not possible for those who are aspiring for worldly pleasures. It is unwise and ungodly to seek worldly happiness per se.

"No conviction of the resolute nature is formed in the mind of those who are attached to pleasures and power, and whose
minds are drawn away by that flowery speech which the unwise-enamoured of Vedic utterances, declaring there is nothing else, full of desire, having Svarga as their goal- utter, (a speech) which promises birth as the reward of actions and which abounds in specific acts for the attainment of pleasure and power, O son of Pritha".

Sri Krishna instructed Arjuna by presenting an elaborate philosophy of Action to dispel his agony. Gītā is not a Treatise purely on Action or knowledge in isolation.

"Wherefore, for a man who is qualified for works it is necessary to perform works before he becomes fit for the path of knowledge".

The performance of action in the right spirit provides an occasion to come face to face with the Absolute. The Yogi always acts with an ultimate end in view. That is why Sri Krishna defines Yoga as 'dexterity in action' - 'Yoga karmeṣu kauśalam'.

The third chapter of the Bhagavad-Gītā gives an elaborate account of the causal origin of our action. Man's actions are not merely the result of his biological and psychological make up but are the
outcome of his cosmic reality. Man's biological nature is such that he is made to perform action. He cannot remain in a state of inaction for even a moment. So Gītā suggests to engage in activity.

"None, verily, even for an instant, ever remains doing no action; for every one is driven helpless to action by the energies born of Nature."⁹

The Bhagavad-Gītā elaborating on the peculiarities of the performance of action gives the clue that men are so made to act because of his Svabhāva and also because of the Guṇās inherent in Prakṛti. Prakṛti which is constituted of the three Guṇās or essential modes of energy namely Sattva, the seed of intelligence which conserves the working of energy; Rajas, the seed for force and action, creates the working of energy; Tamas, the seed of inertia and non-intelligence. Prakṛti with all its Guṇās in perfect equilibrium is in a state of rest and with the slightest imbalance in it working create disturbance in Prakṛti and then begins ceaseless action involving creation (srṣṭi), conservation (sthithi) and dissolution (saṁhāra) which continues so long as Puruṣa permits it. The continuance of the world process completely obscures the real nature of Prakṛti. And when
Puruṣa withdraws from the process of cosmic evolution the Guñás fall into its original position and the soul preserves its pristine purity and turn Godward.

Lord Krishna points out the importance of action by quoting his own case:

"I have nothing what so ever, O Partha to accomplish in the three worlds, not these anything attainable which is to be attained. Still I keep on action." ¹⁰

"For should I not ever engage in action, unwearied, men would in all matters, follow My Path, O son of Pritha" ¹¹.

Even though God is not directly obliged to anything mundane, but he remains ever active. The withdrawal of God from the entire cosmic process would necessarily cause evolutive confusion and men in every walk of life remain inactive.

Stressing the necessity of action in human life, Lord Krishna give us instructions as to how we should perform action. Men ordinarily do actions with attachment to the work, i.e., with a desire to its results or the fruits of action. This will naturally bind the soul resulting in rebirth and transmigration of the soul.
"He who, restraining the organs of action, sits thinking in his mind the objects of senses, self-deluded, he is said to be one of false conduct"\textsuperscript{12}.

"He who, follows not here the wheel set in motion, who is sinful life, indulging in senses, he lives in vain, O son of Pritha"\textsuperscript{13}.

We must engage in the performance of those kinds of works which will bring peace and prosperity in the Universe and equally cleanse the individual bodily and mentally. The work which proceeds from egoistic motives and desires is lower to those kind of works which are selfless and unattached.

According to the \textit{Gita} an enlightened man never engage in the performance of actions for selfish interest or for its fruits.

"Renouncing all actions in Me, with thy thought resting on the Self, being free from hope, free from selfishness, devoid of fervor; do thou fight"\textsuperscript{14}.

\textit{Naiskarmya} in \textit{Gita} is a state or condition in which one is affected by the work done. The natural law is that we are always bound by the results of action. Every action in its natural course binds
the soul and therefore remains bondage or saṁsāra. What is required is not the total renunciation of works, but renunciation of selfish desires.

The Gīta teaches that abstention from action is not a remedy to free the soul from desires. Actions according to the Bhagavad Gīta teaching has to be undertaken and performed in the spirit of sacrifice (Yajña). Yajña means exerting oneself for the benefit of others in a word of service. And where service is rendered for the sake of service, there is no room for attachment and the like. So one should perform actions for the benefit of others. Such a man alone is said to be qualified for liberation.

The term Yajña is derived from the sanskrit root 'yaj' which means 'to worship'. The meaning of the term in English is 'sacrifice'. But the underlying idea that all actions performed for the good or service of others are forms of Yajña. "One who is always engaged in Yajña is not subject to the binding effects of Karma"15.

The Bhagavat Gīta stresses the importance of Yajña for the sake of relieving the soul from the binding effects of Karma. Further the Gīta also insists on Yajña or work for the good of others where in one sacrifices his whole body for the service of others. The word Yajña
which also means 'to worship'. As such it is an act of pleasing God by worshipping Him through service to others. The whole concept of yajña was that people should engage in physical labour. 'Laberare est orare' - 'work is worship'.

The Gīta having thus outlined how the soul can be liberated from the bondage of Karma insists upon the performance of unattached action for the attainment of the supreme.

"Therefore, do there ever perform without attachment the work that thou must do, for performing action without attachment man attains the supreme."

According to the Gīta work done without attachment is far superior to the work done in a spirit of sacrifice and for selfish motives. The unselfish and unattached performance of work purifies the mind which will in turn lead to ultimate realization and welfare of the world. Hence Gīta's insistence on the performance of actions without the desire for its fruits or phala there of fulfils the purpose of God.

The central teaching of the Bhagavad-Gīta namley the ideal of i.e. Karma-Yoga is clearly explained in the following verses.
"Our concern should be solely with the action, and not for he benefits of action. We should not become benefit motivated and attached to inaction."17.

Thus the Gīta teaches us how to attain spiritual self-realization by performing one's duty for the sake of duty in the spirit of renunciation. In the Gīta, the Lord declares that actions need not be renounced but should be performed without attachment. When an action is performed for the welfare of others without any selfish motive it is called Karma Yoga or the discipline of Action.

The Lord said:

"Actions pollute me not, nor have I a desire for the fruit of actions. He who knows me thus is not bound of actions"18.

Sankaracharya too made clear as to what this idea means.

"Anyone who identifies himself with and hence realise that he is no doer, has not desire for fruit and is freed from the bondage of action"19. That is to say, he must ascent to the state of God-realization.

He who dedicates his action to Brahman and performs them without attachment is not smeared by sin, as the lotus leaf by water. In
Chāṇḍogya Upaniṣhad it is said, "As water does not touch the lotus leaf, even so the sinful does not smear one who knows Ātman".

In Bhagavad Gītā it is said that Yogies perform unattached action like this.

"Only with the body, mind and intellect and also with the senses, do the yogies perform action without attachment for the sake of self purification".

The body, senses and the mind are not ours as we ordinarily think of them. But they belong to nature or Prakṛti. They are meant for serving a larger purpose and therefore are meant for the world. Hence, it is a misnomer an our part to think of them as ours and to have such nations as 'thine' and 'mine' in them. The actions performed with the body, mind and intellect are intended to serve others rather than oneself. In such a state there should not be a sense of doership and hence are completely free from the clutches of actions. A true Karma-yogi do not refrain from the performance of action but do it with an altruistic end in view mainly intended for the good and welfare of the world (Lokasāṅgraha).
In the Bhagavad-Gītā, karma or action is understood in the sense of performance of one's duty or Svadharma. Paradharma is other's duty. Svadharma constitutes the uniqueness of personality. The personality of each individual has a value and sense in itself. One cannot hide the anatomy of his personality. It is the sense in which Gītā refers to Svadharma.

"Again, seeing thine own duty, shouldst not shrink from it, for there is no higher good for a Kṣhatriya than a righteous war. A Kṣhatriya has no duty higher than that of fighting in a righteous war"[22].

Svadharma in the context of the Gītā plays a double role. As a general doctrine, it has various implications. It speaks of those specific qualities which are expressive of the inherent nature of human beings. Svadharma in the given context of the Gītā is nothing but the performance of one's duties in accordance with one's station in life without any reference whatsoever to caste, creed, or birth. Arjuna's Svadharma lies in his determination and commitment to discharge his duties as a warrior. Svadharma comes to one as a natural course of his birth. We are born to fulfil those duties which fall in our way. To disown Svadharma amounts to disowning oneself which is suicidal.
In determining one's svadharma due consideration should be given to what is helpful and appropriate to one's nature and station in life. One has to find fulfilment in the performance of svadharma by persisting in the continued practice of the same which is always indicative of growth and development. The nobility or otherwise to Svadharma does not depend on our ordinary understanding of it. What is required is that Svadharma great or small may be performed in the best manner possible. In the words of the Gita one's own dharma even if devoid of merit, is the best for oneself.

"Better one's own duty, though devoid of merit, than the duty of another well discharged. Better is death in one's own duty; the duty of another is productive of danger".\textsuperscript{23}

The happiness thus resulting therefrom the performance of one's own work even without excellence is far superior to the performance of another's duty with merit. Steadfast loyalty and faithfulness in the discharge of one's own duty however low and ignorable it may be is sure to pave the way towards the Supreme.
According to the *Gītā* there is not a short cut method for the realization of the Supreme. *Karma-Yoga* pervades the whole of human life. The cause of life and every value implied in it bear a stamp of realization. The attitude of a dedicated person is always uninfluenced by the pairs of opposites such as pleasure and pain, victory or failure etc. but ever remain established in Pure Being. He should not have any anxiety about the past, present or future.

Closely allied with the concept of *Swadharma* in the *Gītā* is the description of the concept of *Sthithaprajñā*. *Sthithaprajñā* is one who is established in the divine consciousness. The *Sthithaprajñā* is a man of steadfast mind and the fullest embodiment of self control. He is capable of controlling all the organs including the mind. He can guide them to *Karma-Yoga* or the Way of Action to fulfil the purpose of God.

"One who renounce all the cravings which torment the heat and desires his contentment from within himself is said to be a *sthithaprajñā* or *samādhistha* (one stable in spirit)."
Sthithaprajña can devote himself to the performance of his duty with an evenness of temper. This is the cultivation of the skill in action or Yoga. The success of an action no longer lies in the performance of the action and never in its results. A sthithaprajña is capable of performing his duties totally unattached. A sthithaprajña having full control over the senses, mind and intellect, abandon all desires and restrain himself and do not indulge in undesirable activity. He directs himself to holy objects and dedicate himself in the service of God and is ever fit to receive the grace of God. Once the grace of God has been descended upon him all his sorrows vanish and he is said to be stable both in body and mind.

"One who is over patient and works with single minded attention to the task on hand may be described as a yogi skilled in action"\(^{25}\).

"He who knows Brahman can neither rejoice on obtaining the pleasant, or grieve on obtaining the unpleasant - steady - minded, undeluded, resting in Brahman"\(^{26}\).

Sri Krishna instructs Arjuna to practice Karma-Yoga and set an example for the whole world. Ordinarily people always imitate the
standards set and followed by great men. The Gīta points out that great men are path makers and hence Sri Krishna asks Arjuna to be a typical model of Karma-Yoga to the world. In the Gīta reference was made to both Janaka and Sri Krishna as best example of Karma-Yogins.

"For through action alone Janaka and others achieved perfection, even with a view to the guidance of man behind thou must act".  

Those who have renounced all actions and remains steady in right knowledge obtain liberation. Karma-Yoga performed in the right spirit of devotion to the Lord leads to moksa or liberation. It involves the purification of the mind, knowledge and renunciation of all actions for final release.

The successful practice of Svadharma demands complete control over kāma and krodha ie. craving and anger. So long as the mind is not pure and peaceful the state of desirelessness is impossible of attainment.

Desireless action is the outcome of the working together of the internal and external aspects of action. The fourth chapter of the Gīta gives an account of how the mental aspect of an action can be kept in
complete control The *Gīta* gives instruction to a *Karma-Yogi* to perform such actions with the sole aim of purifying the mind. The act of purifying the mind in the *Gīta* is known as *Vikarma*.

The Fourth Chapter of the *Gīta* gives utmost importance to the three co-related concept- namely *karma*, *vikarma* and *akarma*. *Karma* is understood in the sense of *Svadharma*. The active participation of the mind in the performance of an action is *vikarma*. The *Yoga* of desirelessness is the result of the involvement of the mind and the complete mastery of the mind by the doer of the action. The desireless in action is a prelude to the purification of the mind and complete mastery of the mind.

The role played by *Vikarma* is central to the *Gīta* teaching in that the mind gets united with it. Every outward action has an inward reference. This internal reference of an action i.e. *Vikarma* largely determines the course of the action. The unification of the internal and the external aspects of an action is so strong that its disunity very often damage the spirit of an action. The *Gīta* teaches that action should be performed in the spirit of desirelessness. Hence mere outward action
without any reference to the mind whatsoever and mere meditation in itself which is not concretised in overt action are value less.

"Renunciation and Yoga through action both lead to the highest bliss: but, of the two, Yoga through action is esteemed more than renunciation of action".

The outward action without reference to the mind loses its meaning and significance. The performance of such actions ever remains barren and hence are not capable of cultivating desirelessness. The internal touch gives the action a unique form. The potency that karma is capable of developing with the mere touch of vikarma is beyond description. The element of desireless in action is the result of vikarma being applied to karma. In the same way Svadharma combined with vikarma opens up new avenues and pave the way for supreme wisdom.

Vikarma and Karma in combination releases a power which result in Akarma ie inaction in action. This is has the potency to reduce karma to the ashes of Akarma. Eventhough one acts he is no longer the doer and therefore is not bound by the results of the action. The action so performed leaves no residues of sin or virtue. (Pāpa or puṇya).
“He who can see inaction in action, who can also see action in inaction, he is wise among men, he is devout, he is the performer of all actions”?

The mind and heart of the doer is no longer polluted by the result of the action. His mind remains still, steady and illumined. In the fourth chapter the Gīta Sri Krishna advises Arjuna for an indepth study of Akarma, wherein the Lord instructs Arjuna to act but no longer to be affected by the actions. Remaining calm and steady in mind and heart one continues to act for the fulfilment of a Divine purpose. Akarma is the state of being released from the bondage of action.

“Free from desire, with the mind and the self controlled, having relinquished all possessions doing mere bodily action, he incur no sin”.

Man cannot escape from the life of action. The desires bound us to samsara from which ordinarily there is no escape. ‘Dedicate to God and do your work’, is the only way out of samsara. Karma becomes natural and normal to every one if it is done in a spirit of Akarma. Karma with the aid of Vikarma prepares the mind for Divine Grace.
While performing Svadharma, one can remain unattached and get beyond Kāma and krodha (craving and anger) lobha and moha (greed and delusion). When once actions do not distort the mind and take place naturally, we do not notice that they have taken place at all. When karma becomes natural and normal (Sahaja), it becomes Akarma. It is this sahajakarma that we call Akarma. Akarma in the Gita is understood to have two aspects namely Saṅkhya and Yoga. Both of them lead to the same goal of salvation. Saṅkhya means the intellectual way of renunciation of works (Sannyāsa) and Yoga means Karma-Yoga i.e. the unselfish performance of work. The bewildered Arjuna asks Sri Krishna which of the method is better to be followed. Sri Krishna replied:

"The renunciation of works and the unselfish performance both lead to the soul’s salvation. Better of the two, the unselfish performance of works is better than their renunciation."

From the stand point of the seeker after perfection (sādhaka) Karma-Yoga is of utmost importance. Yoga is understood to be one
aspect of Akarma. It is a state in which one acts as if he does not act. Whereas in saîkhya one refrains from action but has the power to move the whole world to action. This is understood to be the dilemma resulting from Akarma. Thus action through inaction is a riddle beyond comprehension of a sadhaka but possible for the siddha (the perfected one). Karma-Yoga is thus both the way (sādhana) and the (niṣṭha) whereas sannyasa is only the goal. From the stand point of the sadhaka, Karma-Yoga, is performed as against sannyasa for it comes to one as a natural course of events. Karma-Yoga according to the Gīta is the concern of a man who is possessed of the higher self (Ātman). A Karma-Yogin finds his satisfaction in the determination of all activity with the help of his higher self (Ātman). An action is performed not because it is rewarding nor it is rejected if otherwise. The Gīta insists on the performance of an action both unconditionally and categorically because it is the reflection of our real being (Svabhāvajam). It is obligatory on the part of a Karma-Yogin apart-from its results. It is the stability and equanimity of mind shown by a Karma-Yogin towards the agreeable and the disagreeable which is the supreme merit of Karma-Yoga.
Karma-Yoga being a philosophy of life and is very much ease to practice. This is the distinguishing mark of Karma-Yoga from that of \textit{sannyasa}. But in the ultimate stage of perfection both are the same.

"The ignorant speak of renunciation (\textit{Saṁkhya}) and practice of works (\textit{Yoga}) as different, not the wise. He also applies well to one, gets the fruit of both" \textsuperscript{33}.

"The status which is obtained by men of renunciation is reached by men of action also. He who sees that the ways of renunciation and of action are one, he sees (truely)" \textsuperscript{34}.

Then it goes without saying that perfect \textit{Karma-Yoga} is \textit{sannyasa} and perfect \textit{sannyasa} is \textit{Karma-Yoga}. In the ultimate analysis there is no line of distinction drawn between the two. But for the seeker of perfection \textit{Karma-Yoga} is much easier.

\textit{Karma-Yoga} is thus understood as a discipline of self-realization. It implies that every act is expressing of the faith and conviction that
one has in one’s self. It is the living faith in one’s dharma i.e. Svadharma which is ultimately counted and also acts as a means to one’s uniting with one’s ownself. (yukta-chetas)

“Doing continually all actions, seeking refuge in Me, looking upon Me as the supreme, and ever remaining steadfast, do they fix their thought on Me. Fixing thy thought on Me, thou shalt, by My grace, tide over all difficulties, but it from self-conceit, thou wilt not listen (to Me) thou shall perish”.

Further the Gītā attempts to show the place of God in Karma-Yoga. Karma and God in the Gītā is understood as the highest embodiment of Dharma. God is also the ideal Karma-Yogin. It is also instructed that one has to transcend the barriers of Karma in order to move towards the spirit.

“All that is here” says Sri Krishna “is stung on Me as row of gems on a string”.

God is immanent in the world and remains ever active. The world needs God and vice versa.

“By me all this universe is pervaded through. My unmanifest form. All beings abide in Me but I do not abide in them.”
To quote Radhakrishan: “The man of the world is lost in the varied activities of the world. He throws himself into the mutable world (kṣhāra). The quietist withdraws into the silence of Absolute (akṣhara) but the ideal man of the Gīta goes beyond these two esteems and works like Purushothama, reconciles all possibilities in the worked without getting involved in it. He is the doer of works who yet is not the doer, kartaram akartaram, The Lord is the pattern of an unwearied and active worker who does not, by His work forfeit his integrity of spirit”.

The path that is shown by the Gīta is known as ‘practical reason (Vyavasayatmika-buddhi) Karma-Yoga in the Gīta is but the application of this practical reason and therefore acquires uniqueness and serves the highest purpose for man. (Yoga karmeṣu kauśalam).

In the state of Avidya Arjuna failed to know his real nature. The self in its essence is of the nature of pure consciousness. In the highest stage of perfection of the soul Karma ceases to have hold on the liberated self. Knowledge is thus a prelude to correct understanding and right action. In this sense karma in the Gīta is said to culminate in Jnana. Karma and Jñāna are paths to ultimate self-realization.

In the context of the Gīta, Arjuna in his despondency failed to understand his true nature. Then the Lord instructed
In this world a two-fold way of life has been taught by Me-the path of knowledge for men of philosophic discrimination and that of action for men of *Karma*.\(^3\)

*Karma-Yoga* is distinguishable from other *Yogas*. Lokamanya Balagangadhara Tilak in his *Gita Rahasya* had brought out the significance of the primacy of Action. According to him the real meaning of *Bhagavad-Gita* consists in spreading the message of *Karma-Yoga*. *Karma-Yoga* is the essence of *Bhagavad -Gita* and all other *Yogas* are directed towards *Karma* as the ultimate goal of life.
NOTES


12. *Ibid* Chapter III, 6

13. *Ibid* Chapter III, 16

14. *Ibid* Chapter III, 30


17. *Ibid* Chapter II, 47

19. Mahadevadesai, *The Gita according to Gandhi or Gospel of selfless Action.*


25. *Ibid* P.47


27. *Ibid* Chapter III, 20


30. *Ibid* Chapter V, 6

31. *Ibid* Chapter

32. *Ibid* Chapter V, 2.

33. *Ibid* Chapter V.4

34. *Ibid* Chapter VI, 20.


38. *Ibid*

39. *Ibid*, p.72