

Model of Karma Yoga in Modern Context

Abstract

Actions are there all the time whether sitting alone or thinking what is necessary is that actions should be understood. Activity is synonymous with life itself. Individuals who try to run away from the world cannot escape from activity. Karma Yoga is the 'Yoga of Action'. It develops a balanced and holistic sense of duty, develops clarity of mind, a sense of humor and faith in the divine order, and maintains a quiet and calm state of mind maintains a sense of balance and right attitude towards life. Karma Yoga Model has been divided into eight limbs/steps like Ashtanga Yoga of Sage 'Patanjali': Acceptance of one self, sense of charity, selection of duties, taking full responsibilities, working with integrated self, working with joy in the heart, transcending ego sense, leaving fruit to the God. Yoga in modern context is the prevention rather than cure. It is therefore wise to adopt the above mentioned yogic way of life rather than falling prey to stress.

Keywords: Karma Yoga, Bhagavad Gita, Ashtanga Yoga.

Introduction

Actions go on with us all through life. There is not a moment that the individual is not busy doing something. Various physical activities are being carried on. One might be sitting quietly in a room thinking that he is doing no action, but feeling and emotions never stop and when person come out of the room other reactions may occur. Actions are there all the time whether sitting alone or thinking what is necessary is that actions should be understood.

In Ayurveda, we say disease is a result of an unbalanced state of mind. All kinds of actions that cause diseases are due to unbalance thinking process. A person constantly aware of thoughts and actions is less likely to suffer disease. Unthinking kind suffer disease. Origin of disease is in loss of balance. Therefore, for the better reflection there is a need to understand the holistic approach in thinking process. A comprehensive model of moral development must encompass moral sensitivity, moral reasoning, moral motivation, and moral character. Western models of moral development have often failed to show validity outside the culture of their origin.

Duration of the Study

2014-17

Aim of the Study

1. To develop a model of Karma Yoga in modern context.
2. To develop a philosophical and spiritual model for the removal of different mental and physical problems of human beings.
3. To develop a philosophical and spiritual model for moral development.
4. To develop a model to decrease the job stress level.
5. To develop a model that may help to eradicate the poverty of the nation.

Review of Literature

Deustch & Dalvi (2004), According to Bhagavad Gita (Ch.5), both sannyasa (renunciation, monastic life) and karma yoga are means to liberation. Between the two, it recommends karma yoga, stating that anyone who is a dedicated karma yogi neither hates nor desires, and therefore such as person is the "eternal renouncer".

Ganeri (2007), A part of the premise of "disinterested action" is that the more one acts with the hope of getting rewards, the more one is liable to disappointment, frustration or self-destructive behavior. Another part of the premise is that the more one is committed to "disinterested action", the more one considers the dharma (ethical dimension), focuses on other aspects of the action, strives to do one's best, and this leads to liberating self-empowerment.



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Arun & Sanjay (2013), Krishna said that only work come in your jurisdiction and not the result (Karmanyevadhikaraste ma phaleshu kadachana).

Mulla & Krishan (2013), The Karma-Yoga is a technique of the Bhagawad Gita for moral development. Karma-Yoga is conceptualized as made up of three dimensions viz. duty-orientation, indifference to rewards, and equanimity. Based on the study on 459 people from two large Indian organizations found that the dimensions of Karma-Yoga are related to moral sensitivity, moral motivation, and moral character.

Ramsukhdass (2014), It is evident that no work remains fruitless. It will give either positive result or negative. It is the positive psychology by which we learn to be happy. By focusing on only work we can give 100% of our concentration. It is the desire of a result that comes in the way causing anxiety. Whenever emotions are intense, it causes distraction and work is hampered. Krishna also emphasizes to focus on the present not on past or tomorrow. It is the similar to give up the desire and result. Expectation of a result is future of the work done in the present. We should not forget to plan for future because planning is present. Work is worship-the statement is perfect in its meaning when we do not think that which work is great and which is not. Flow of work as explained in positive psychology can be only understood by understanding karma yoga when we become indulged in the given work. It is intrinsic motivation secondary to the pleasure we gain by just doing work, which is higher state of concentration.

Rastogi (2015), Karma Yoga is a persistent positive state of mind that is characterized by absorption and service consciousness.

Furthermore, the findings also suggest the importance of sense control and equanimity as the necessary prerequisites for individuals to practise Karma Yoga.

Is It Possible To Escape From Karma?

Everybody that is born in this world brings with him a certain nature (Prikriti or Svabhava). It represents the aggregate of his innate tendencies (Gunas) from which he is inseparable. Its hold is so strong that it constantly propels a person, to act in a certain way.

This inherent nature determines one's aptitude in life and takes him towards self-fulfillment. Since it is not possible to escape ones from Prakriti, therefore it is impossible to escape from Karma.

Lord Krishna in third chapter of Gita says,

**Nityam Kuru Karma Tavam Karma Jyayao
Hayakarmana!**

**Shariryatrapa Ca Te Na Prasadhyed Karmana!!
(Gita: 3.8)**

i.e. Do your routine work. It is best to do work, rather than not to do work. Without karma (actions) it is impossible to survive even our body.

Activity is synonymous with life itself. Individuals who try to run away from the world cannot escape from activity. Physical withdrawal into solitude cannot help us since the mind cannot be at rest any time. Moreover, abandonment of action leads us to a state of 'stupor' and 'inertia' which is the manifestation

of the Tamasika (Guna) element in us which is considered the inferior of the three Gunas.

Patanjali describes the various obstacles for them who try to run psychosomatic in nature for which a practicing Yogi has to guard himself. The first five obstacles of them are disease, dullness, doubt, carelessness and laziness. These are related to one's Tamasika conditions and take one's away from action and thus from life itself (Patanjali Yogapradeep, 1.30).

Lord Krishna in third chapter of Gita says,

**Na hi Krischitakshnamapi Jatu Tist
Tayakarmakrita!**

**Karyate Hayavasha Karma Sarva Prikritijairgunai!!
(Gita: 3.5)**

i.e. Nobody in this world, in any situation can escape from karma, because tendency of Prikriti (Sattva, Rajas and Tamas) of a person propel him to act in a certain way.

Karma Yoga

Karma Yoga is the 'Yoga of Action'. It has the following therapeutic dimensions:

1. Develops a balanced and holistic sense of duty.
2. Develops clarity of mind.
3. Develops a sense of humor and faith in the divine order.
4. Maintains a quiet and calm state of mind.
5. Maintains a sense of balance and right attitude towards life.

In brief we can say that Karma Yoga is doing of work with mind fully engaged/involved with positive attitudes, observing, listening and doing in the most balanced way inside and outside having faith in the process and the divine order.

Karma yoga has many similarities with the "Jain practices" of Soji or the "Buddhist practices" of doing daily chores to train the mind. Such practices involve doing whatever physical work that has been assigned to a monk such as sweeping the floor or cleaning the utensils with mindfulness, concentration, and without expectations and distractions. Soji is karma yoga in action, except that you do not offer that work as a sacrifice to God or perform it as part of your God's duty. Their approach to work is based upon the simple principle of total and unconditional involvement.

Karma yoga or path of action as suggested in the Bhagavad-Gita teaches people how to cope with the pains and pleasures of life without choosing and without escaping. It teaches people how to remain engaged with the process of loving, however difficult and distasteful the circumstances may be.

Karma yoga refers to the spiritual practice in which actions are used God's devotees as the means to achieve self-transformation and liberation by escaping from the consequences of their actions. The karma yoga suggests the way to live in this world without getting your hand dirty with the sinful actions. The essential doctrine of karma yoga is explained in several Upanishads and in the Bhagavad Gita. Apart from them, you will also find several references to it in other scriptures.

According to Bhagavad Gita, selfish actions or desire-ridden bind men to their consequences and

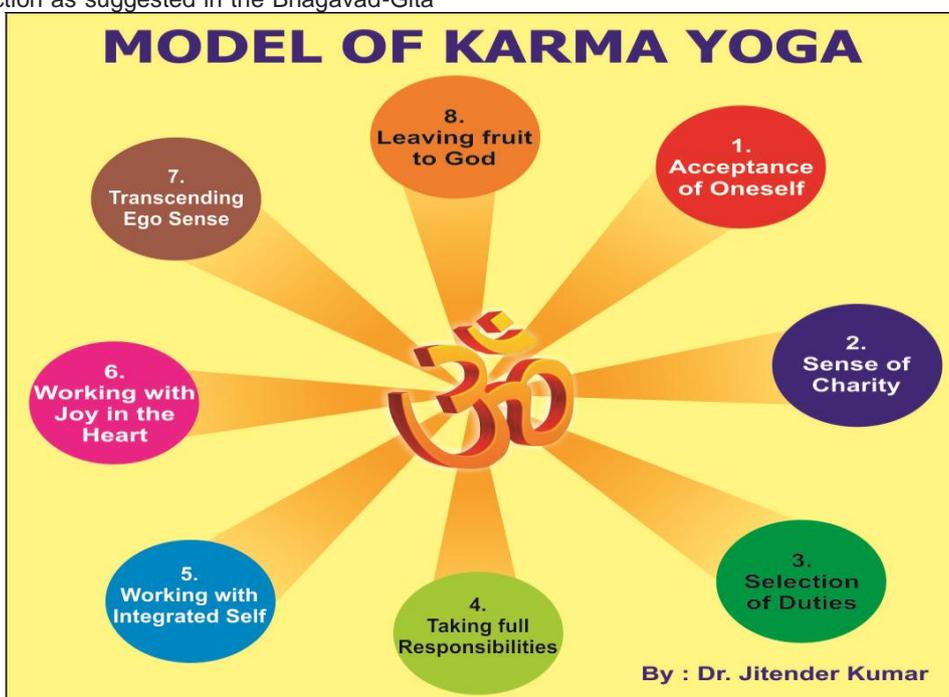
subject them to the cycle of births and deaths. At the same time, one cannot escape from karma by shunning their responsibilities altogether. Inaction or non-action is a solution to the problem of karma. Libration cannot be attained by abstaining from work or by renouncing work (**Gita: 3.4**), because it is not possible for anyone to remain inactive even for a moment. Desire is the eternal enemy of the wise on earth, the insatiable fire (**Gita: 3.39**) which deludes the soul by over powering the senses, the mind and the intellect (**Gita: 3.40**).

Karma yoga goes beyond simple daily chores and extends to the whole life. It is meant not only for spiritual aspirants but also for worldly people, to whom work is the way of life and who have to deal with tougher challenges and greater distractions as they are engaged in the act of living. Karma Yoga or the path of action as suggested in the Bhagavad-Gita

teaches people how to cope with the pains and pleasures of life without choosing and without escaping. It teaches people how to remain engaged with the process of living, however difficult and distasteful the circumstances may be. This is in stark contrast to the popular opinion that men should renounce their worldly things, go to a forest or some secluded place, away from society like a cave and perform tapas or meditation in order to achieve self-realization. Unlike Buddhism, Hinduism is not a monastic religion. It does not prepare people for the rigors of monastic life but for the difficulties and uncertainties of the mortal life.

Model of Karma Yoga in Modern Context

Karma Yoga Model has been divided into eight limbs/steps like Ashtanga Yoga of Sage 'Patanjali':



Acceptance of One Self

Acceptance of oneself means "To accept what nature has given to you". Nobody can add or take away from you. All capacities, talents, propensities and tendencies are yours and not of anybody else in the world. You are unique creation of God so accept it with open mind and identify the tenets like Strengths (hard work, skill, knowledge, honesty); weakness; emotional quotient level; physical capabilities; mental capabilities; spiritual quotient level.

Sense of Charity

All actions or Karmas should have the sense of charity. An action will be a 'Karma Yoga' if it is for the benefit of the others. How do we teach children the idea of unselfish action? We can use the word "We" more and the work "I" less. We can learn to help others. All actions or karmas should have the inherent sense of giving or rendering service to others. An action done for the welfare of others is the foundational element of a 'Karma Yoga', which

causes benefit to others. Sense of service to others or charity develops a feeling of selfless action.

How to develop potential of students to a maximum extent?

How our work developing the attitude of students?

How our works affect the society in a positive or negative manner?

Selection of Duties

In this world one has to act. Actions may be good or bad. The criterion is duty e.g. our health is a duty, caring of near and dear ones is our duty, our duty is to society, to nation and to world at large. So duty should be selected with sincerity. Actions are important and have to be directed so that they can do well for us. Energy, skills, thinking is there and the person has to use these. When a certain person creates a sense of duty there is direction and concentration. A person carrying out duty without unnecessary desires is right. A person who does not allow negative ideas to come up and does duty with dedication and does not create false emotions is right.

Duty may be assigned to a person or accepted by him. After acceptance of duty one should follow with full dedication.

4. Taking full Responsibilities

After selection of duty now it is one's full responsibility to carry out its action with full potential. Responsibility should be accepted with much thinking about any loss or gain or any other reward. A responsible person is that who carry our actions like his Dharma or duty. At the personnel level Dharma means doing one's duty, have a direction in life and live in harmony. Dharma is the basis of energy, faith, commitment, determination and devotion.

5. Working with Integrated Self

Normally there is not much coordination between body, mind and spirit function. This is termed as a disintegrated personality. There exists a position of disharmony within oneself. Therefore, to train our mind to accepted situations and time, we shall have to go within ourselves and focus our energies on assigned task or work. In Gita, Yoga is described as 'Skill of performing Action'. To perform action well, what is needed is, total absorption in the activity of the moment, with a physical, mental and vital force in action with a strong motivation to bring out best not only oneself but also in product of action rendered for the elevation of society or mankind.

Working with Joy in the heart

One should always work with sense of joy, creativity and full involvement. But our mind is crammed with our old and painful thoughts and experiences. So, to get rid of such painful thoughts new positive thoughts must be introduced. Here creativity has potential to replace the monotony of work (i.e. dullness due to lack of variety or variation). Every moment of activity is a moment of accomplishment of joy, since joy lies in the unique activity itself, not in the fruits of activity. Therefore, a sense of arousal and motivation of the self is the essence in Karma Yoga.

Transcending Ego Sense

While doing Karma (actions) there should be no involvement of ego sense. Ego is a big obstacle in the process of self growth of Karma Yoga. Ego is one in the list of the kleshas (negative behaves) which involve us in is the bondage or attachment. In Yoga Sutra, the sage, Patanjali, describes the various obstacles, which take one to psychosomatic problems in nature, which a practicing Yogi has to guard oneself. Disease, dullness, doubt, carelessness and laziness are related to the Tamasika state of mind or condition which takes us away from the successful action.

Leaving Fruit to the God

Every karma inevitably brings its destined result. No one can escape from the law of karmic results. It is a different matter, however that the results may not be in accordance with your expectations. In spite of our best efforts, the outcomes may be partial or even adverse, since there are so many factors at work which are beyond our control.

Things do not always happen according to our expectations. When you are engaged in your work

you should keep in mind all the possibilities and try to exercise without bothering about success or failure.

In the 2nd chapter of Gita, Lord Krishna says,

**Karmanya Vadikarste Ma Faleshu Kadachana !
Ma KarmFalaheturbhurma Te Sangoastavkarmani
!!**

(Gita: 2.47)

i.e. Your right is to work only and never to the fruit thereof. Do not consider yourself to be the cause of the fruit of action; nor let your attachment be to inaction.

In the third chapter of Gita, Lord Krishna says,

**Yasitatava Indryani Mansa Niyamayarbate Arjuna !
Karmandriya Karmayogaskta sa Vishisyate!! (Gita:
3.7)**

i.e. Hey Arjuna ! The people who work without any desire, by controlling of senses by their "Mana" without any desire are noble.

Who is true Karma Yogi?

True karma yoga consists of performing one's duty without attachment, remaining even minded in success and failure (Gita: 2.48). It is accomplished by self-restraint, controlling the mind and senses sand desire (Gita: 2.64, 65 & 71).

For a true karma yogi, karma itself is the yoga; one has to accept whatever comes in one's way and not consider any work superior or inferior. With one's limited vision and lack of perspective one may not be able to correctly judge the righteousness or the unrighteousness of actions and decide on the right priorities. Do your duties remembering that you are only an instrument in the hands of God who is the final arbiter of all actions. With this attitude, the ego will be transcended, all karmas will become equal in our eyes and everything that you do will be divine.

Freedom in action is possible only, if one is able to free oneself from the expectations of results. Karma in itself is not source of bandage, the thoughts about the outcomes, successful or otherwise, which cause all the trouble, since mind will constantly oscillates between the two opposite poles of success and defeat delight or depression. There is no denying the fact that any karma that is performed is a means to achieve a specific end you have to understand that there is no point in bothering about the results.

A true karma yogi combines deepest interest with perfect detachment. Every moment of activity is a moment of accomplishment, of joy, since his joy lies in the activity itself, not in the fruits of activity.

In the sixth chapter of Gita, Lord Krishna says that

**Anasrita Karmaphalla Karya Karma Karoti Ya!
Sa Sanayasi Cha Yogi Cha Na Nirgirm Chakriya!!
(Gita:6.1)**

Do your duties remembering that you are the only an instrument in the hands of God who is the final arbiter of all actions. Freedom in action is possible only, if one is able to free oneself from the expectations of results. A true karma yogi combines deepest interest with perfect detachment which leads to peace , harmony, calm state of mind, holistic sense of duty and ultimately leads to reduction of stress due to work. One ought to simplify one's life style.

Philosophy of karma Yoga in modern context is the prevention rather than cure. It is therefore wise to adopt the above mentioned yogic way of life rather than falling prey to stress.

Conclusion

It can be concluded with a remark that karma yoga is a spiritual tool in man's hand which is based on the philosophy of Dharma, Moral Law, Laws of Spirituality, Law of Science (cause and effect relationship) and basic Law of learning in human psychology. Therefore karma yoga is a potential tool in the hand of a practitioner to attain better results and also in the hands of a manager to seek quality output. Karma yoga or path of action teaches people how to cope with the pains and pleasures of life without choosing and without escaping. Let us accept and practice karma yoga as a therapy in our moments of stress and difficulty in life.

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