



## **Excellence in performance of moral duties in Geetarahasya**

*Prof. Dr. Deepak J Tilak*

*Professor, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune- 411037*

---

### **Abstract**

Lokmanya Tilak's commentary on Shrimad Bhagwad Gita changed the traditional view of Gita from Sanyas to Karmayoga. Lokmanya Tilak presented his observation against inaction or renunciation. Tilak through his thesis proved that doing is superior to undoing. Gita is the part of Mahabharat. During Mahabharat times, social system and family institutes were highly stable. In that period, it was the necessity of the time to think about Dharma (ethical action) - Adharma deeply blended with the social engineering.

While explaining Karma Yoga, Tilak preached us the skill on excellence to perform one's duty knowingly with social consideration. Such duty should be with selfless motives, i.e. Nishkam Karmayog. Tilak also explained complexity in various duties. Any exercise or extreme action creates suffering for man or society. They cannot avoid its fruits whether good or bad. The only thing the human being can choose is to perform good or ethical act which can restrict further sufferings. The greatest good for the greatest number cannot decide the Tightness of action. One has to decide it considering his knowledge and motives behind action taking into account social wellbeing.

## **Keywords**

Geetarahsya, Lokmanya Tilak, action, desire, duty, purity, mind, Karmayog

## **Introduction**

Lokmanya Tilak's commentary on Shreemad Bhagwad Gita is a monumental work in oriental philosophical knowledge. Tilak changed the traditional interpretation of Gita and established Karmayog against sanyas or renunciation.

Tilak studies the Eastern and Western philosophical thoughts and argued it with oriental Sanskrit texts and proved that the ancient Indian thinkers have studies in depth regarding human mind, behavior, social status, purity of action, etc.

Tilak wanted people to be active rather than inactive. As long as one is alive, he has to perform duties. One cannot avoid his duties by adopting renunciation or Sanyas. Even Adi Shakaracharya who was Sanyasi, travelled all over India for re-establishing the vedic religion. He performed his duty by writing books as well as establishing missions (Peethas) and awakened people to the true significance of vedic religion.

Lokmanya Tilak discussed distinctly all the way, i.e. Bhakti Marg Sanyas marg, Sankhya Marga and Karmayoga to achieve the ultimate satisfaction or Moksha. Tilak advocated that doing is superior to undoing. Running away from your duties or your social responsibilities could not help for the progress of the society.

During Mahabharat period, social system and family institutions were highly stable. In that period, the concept of Dharma (Ethical action or Adharma (unethical actions) good or bad, worthy or unworthy, got to be decided for social fabrics. For more than 4000 years "Gita" remained a guiding force to human beings. This gave an impetus to Lokmanya Tilak to write his commentary on Gita to activate the masses towards attainment of Karmayoga. The word 'Yoga' means to join. Tilak has clarified that the meaning of 'Yoga' in Gita has a different meaning than patanjali Yoga Sutra.

'Yoga' in Geetarahsya is for excellence in performance of Karma - action with detached attitude to its success or failure. Geetarahsya tells us about one's moral duty and ethical act. Human being living in the society would be required to perform his duty in light of the circumstances. He has to perform his functions wholeheartedly. These acts are to be looked as moral and social

act also. The skill to perform such moral-social ethical duties is Karma-Yoga. In this research, the Researcher wants to deal only with the process of performing ethical duties in view of social circumstances.

### **Method used in the present research:**

To understand Lokmanya Tilak views in Geetarahasya regarding excellent performance of moral, unselfish, social duties in view of social circumstances, it was necessary for the Researcher to refer Geetarahasya and particularly 'Karmayog Shashtra' and Karma-Vipak in particular. There are many other commentaries which explain Lokmanya Tilak's view further like S.L. Karandikar and V.R. Kothari. The Researcher has referred all these books and tried to find the essence of Karma Yoga Science.

### **Need and Importance of the research**

The Researcher has studied a large number of books on Geetarahasya. Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak wanted to change the orthodox and traditional belief about 'Gita'. He studied various literatures in Veda, Upanishada, Mahabharat, various commentaries on Gita, Eastern and Western philosophies and wrote his Commentary. He wrote introduction of around 600 pages, wherein he, step-by-step, tried to convince people that the essence of Gita is towards doing rather than undoing.

For normal readers who do not want to study these numerous references, on each point wants to know the essence in Short. While performing his duties and to know the philosophy of ethical way to perform his duties with excellence. The Researcher has tried to make it short to serve the need of the common people.

### **Our findings**

The Researcher has tried to collect various references about the Karmayoga Shashtra or the Science of performing the duties from the book Geetarahasya - Karmayoga Shashtra by B.G. Tilak [1].

1. In Geetarahsya the word 'Karma' means all doing and the knowing action by the human-being. Karma includes all type of actions such as remembrance (Srnuti), listening (Shruti) and Occupation (Karma). Hence, the performance of action carried out with knowledge is 'Karma'. Any unknown act cannot be referred as Karma Yoga. The way of dutiful action with understanding or self conscious act is called as Karma Yoga. Yoga means appropriate deployment of functions (actions) wherein skill or proficiency is maximum.

The central theme of Geetarahsya is Karmayoga. The word 'Yoga' is commonly known for Patanjali Yoga which helps physical actions, breathing to balance mind and body. But in Gita, the word 'Yoga' is used for the skill to act or perform knowingly with the consideration of social circumstances. Such a duty should be performed with selfless motives.

For example, one can get wealth by borrowing, robbing, begging, serving, corruption, cheating. But the right way to gather wealth is with your work, service or business with freedom. Your act should not damage the social balance.

To charge or get money for your work or service is ethical but merely charging for no work is taking disadvantage of other or the society is non-ethical.

Any act without the knowledge cannot be ethical. In case of the incidents like accident, the action is performed without motive and knowledge, without purposeful desire to do so. Deaths due to accident cannot be seen as unethical even in the eyes of Law.

If you forget your purse in public and someone needy gets the money, you cannot say it as a right act. This good act is performed without any knowledge and purpose. A person, who possesses lot of money but donates some amount, is considered as his good gesture but not a good act. Many people donate money in Dan Peti or in the temples with a motive to make partnership with the God in the unethical business. This cannot be an ethical act.

Karmayog focuses on the social aspects of day-to-day life. Karmayoga is a path for conscious dutiful actions for the human beings. Everyone performs their duty in particular environment or situation. One has to use his conscious mind about right or wrong before he acts.

Nishkam Karma Yog is a practical solution for social life. When we enlarge our personal desire or interest to moral social national level and perform our duty with non personal interest, our action becomes selfless [2]. It disorients the personal interest and Karma becomes pure.

Nishkam Karma is a way or path which guides us to face the crises of life. Shrimad Bhagwat Gita, thus shows us the path of excellence of performance without selfish motives with conscious duty for social wellbeing.

2. Life is impossible without action. Every man has the duty to perform. Such duty depends on the environment or his social life. There is no choice for an individual to decide his life. But there is choice with the individual to perform the duties or acts in ethical or unethical way or in a good or bad manner. It will be reasonable to say that the individual himself has to face the fruits or results or the consequences of his good or bad actions. Performance of action is pre-destined for an individual, family or society or even for a Nation. The consequences of acts, whether good or bad, must be accepted and suffered.

Many a times improper performance of an individual or a group or religion, makes the society suffer. Any extreme act of individual is bad in nature. Every one, i.e. individuals and society must face the consequences for the same. For example - Extreme acts of death like assassination of Indira Gandhi or Mahatma Gandhi has to be suffered by the society without their fault.

Geetarahsya teaches us to get excellence before performing action. It is very difficult for individual to decide good or bad, ethical or unethical [3]. The Western philosophers tell us the greatest good of the greatest numbers. According to Lokmanya Tilak the majority decisions are not the correct way to decide good or bad. According to India literature, in addition to welfare of majority of people, one has to judge the action or decision by his own experience or conscious knowledge [4].

Well being or welfare of the society should get priority over individual personal interest. In ordinary parlance, in day to day life practical performance of yoga includes control over the mind by observing a particular day for performing yoga, etc. However, the purity, Tightness or impiety of karma yoga has to be judged by the soul with its discriminating faculty. The method to this discrimination is the vital question posed to the whole human race. The word 'ethical way'(Dharma) should be intellectually interpreted. It means adoption of particular values by individuals and by the society. Dharma contains rules and regulations of human behavior. Based on three categories of thought process, Adhibhautik thought is concerned with material loss or gain, in which Arjun was not interested. Arjuna was deliberating whether fighting action

in battle was righteous or sinful. Common people are unable to discriminate between what is good and bad and Geeta shows guidance for them. Geeta is a pathway to control mind and bodily instincts. When control over body and mind is attained (this is achieved by obtaining Patanjali Yoga Practices), mental desires (wishes and lust) and excessive pious attitudes should also be controlled.

Excess of anything is poisonous. Every human being must use their discriminating ability to choose between ethical activity (Dharma) and unethical action (Adharma) and between the degree of (more or less) action. Even learned people are caught in the dilemma created by temptation. Arjuna was confused as to which action (Karma) is appropriate towards his relatives and fulfils his social ethical duty (Dharma) as a warrior. Every human being is subject to the state of dual confusion about what truth is, what is false, what is moral and what is immoral, what is pure and what is corrupt! All the religions advocate and support morally uncorrupt behavior which is the implication of Geeta.

To get control on excellence in the performance, one has to develop control over the mind and body. The human body has many desires. They are never satisfied. Mind is so flexible and speedy that every second it can think of some other desire. Any excessive use of desire leads to unethical act. One has to develop knowledge. The knowledge can control mind as well as body. Knowledge helps us to choose between the right and the wrong. It should be clear that in deciding goodness or badness of the action. It is essential in the first place to judge the intention of the individual or the motive behind the act, his awareness of the likely consequences. According to Lokmanya Tilak, this should be judged taking into account the social wellbeing and not selfish motives.

## **Conclusion**

This research has helped to understand the concept of Nishkam Karmayoga and to know the way and means to adopt excellence while performing your duty. This also helps to judge the right or wrong act in view of the effects on the society. The Researcher has proved the statement of problem - The study of excellence performance of moral and ethical duties of human being in Geetarahsya. In short, Tilak explained the main focus of "Geetarahsya Athva Karmayoga Shatra"

as Gyanyukta (Knowledge), Bhaktiyukta (Desire), Nishkam (Selfless), Lokasangraharth (Social wellbeing) and Karmayog.

### **Further research**

The Geetarahsya deals with various ways like Bhakti, Karma, Sansyas, Sankhya Yoga, Dharma, Adhi Bhoutik, Adhyatmik and Adhi Daivik views. The Researchers can make further research taking into consideration current situation.

### **REFERENCES**

1. Geetarahsya by B.G. Tilak (1914)
2. Sankshipta Geetarahsya by Mrs. Indutai Tilak
3. Geetarahsya Dipika by Karandikar
4. Lokmanya B.G. Tilak, The Visionary by Deepak J. Tilak (2019)