The Concept and Value of the Teaching of Karma Yoga According to the Bhagavadgita Book

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Abstract

_Bhagawadgita_ is one of the Vedic supplements in which there are teachings of Karma Yoga, which contain the working concepts as a guide for Hindus in order to meet the physical and spiritual needs to achieve happiness. The teaching of Karma Yoga revolves around the way or way of achieving the perfection of life by carrying out the work as required by the _swadharma_ by not binding itself to the outcome of the work itself. Working in non-self-bondage is to work with devotion and devotion to _Bharman_ without expecting personal gain for the welfare and happiness of fellow human beings. In more modern interpretations, it may be shown as the obligatory acts performed without justifying the decision to explain one’s actions. This teaching focuses on the action of work without being shackled by the work itself.

Keywords: Concepts, Values, Teachings of Karma Yoga, Bhagawadgita

I. Introduction

In an increasingly advanced era, the human tendency is to emphasize things that are related to material, empirical, and quantitative. Humans sometimes work with ease and as quickly as possible, but they always expected outcome as much as possible. The way of working in such of a society has deviated from the nature and purpose of human life. This fact is, of course, due to one’s understanding of the doctrine of his religion which is very superficial, or the possibility of the outbreak of verbalism, that is, the person who understands the teachings of religion but his behavior does not in any way reflect his doctrine.

Understanding of Hinduism is not just a set of ideal, abstract, supernatural and mysterious values, but also a practical, actual and grounded values. From this Hindu understanding, every Hindu believes that shraddha will be felt in life...
if it is actually manifested in the form of useful (karma) work, life in the world, and in heaven. That is why one’s judgment according to the Hindu view lies in the quality of his work. Work is a duty for everyone. One will not achieve happiness in silence, without work and will not achieve perfection and freedom by avoiding work (Gorda, 2003: 5).

Seeing the reality of human working out of meaning and the essence of real work, the researcher wants to examine the concepts and values of work based on the book of Bhagavadgita which is contained in the teachings of Karma Yoga. The Bhagavadgita book contains a dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna amid their doubts in the battlefields because the enemy faced in the war is none other than their own brother, their teacher and Bhaghi’s own grandfather Arjuna. Arjuna deeply feels guilty when Arjuna fights against his brother and his teacher who educates Arjuna becomes a great knight. Arjuna felt it was no use killing his own brother who was innocent even Arjuna thought he would be very sinful. In Arjuna’s shrouded circumstances and in the haunt of guilt, the Arjuna driver Krishna in Hinduism which is believed to be the Vishnu avatars who gives wisdom on Karma Yoga and human swadharma (Bantas, 1994: 27).

The teaching of Karma Yoga does not require a high level of knowledge but is manifested only by real actions and work. Literally, Karma Yoga means “the way of work or devotion in which it contains a high spirit of morality to attain physical and spiritual happiness, through work activity or devotion. The emphasis is a person’s work or deed regardless of whether he or she is an officer, a farmer, a trader and an abusive laborer, the most important is how they do their best according to their talents and professions.

Everyone has their own swadharma and entirely passes the result of his work to Bharman. Thus people are no longer bound by the results of their work. But society is now working away from the teachings of Karma Yoga. The preferred working community is the result of its work is not the process of its work. People have not understood the teachings of Karma Yoga. Society when working, things which are preferred is the result of their work, not the process of their work. People have not understood the teachings of Karma Yoga. Humans who work without being driven by something, not by money, or fame or other motives are the best workers. From the heart, they will be the extraordinary labor, so as to change the human civilization. It is this kind of human who becomes the ultimate aspiration and messenger of the journey of Karma Yoga (Vivekananda 1991: 122).

This issue is discussed with religious theory according to Koentjaraningrat (2002). There are four religious elements that can be used to analyze religion in the social life of society, namely: religious emotion, belief system, religious ceremony system, and religious committee.

II. Discussion

2.1 The Concept of Karma Yoga According to the Bhagavadgita Book

Humans as human beings have individual interests that others have no right to interfere in them, and as social beings, the human need to interact with the surrounding community. It is interesting to discuss how the concept and values of Karma Yoga teachings. In today’s sophisticated modern times, is it possible to practice Karma Yoga that is essential to do unrestricted work? It is a common fact that a person working has a goal to achieve. A worker pursues a wage that is usually in the form of money.

Karma Yoga is one of the yoga of Catur Yoga which should be practiced by Hindus. Karma means work and Yoga mean connecting with God. So karma yoga means connecting with God through unconditional work. Work is
not merely counting profit and loss. Work diligently and thoroughly for the success of the work. Work willingly and sincerely for the satisfaction of the client or the person being served. About the benefits of the fruits of karma that are plucked from the work are left to God Almighty (Pidarta, 2005: 40).

Do good, right, enterprising, honest, and not lazy are mandated in the holy words of God Almighty. This path of the deed is called Karma Yoga. As mentioned earlier that between the path of Karma and Bhakti, so are Karma and Jnana, Jnana and Raja Yoga including the path of Vibhuti Yoga, actually have the same value, yet the understanding and ability of mankind in following the paths which are different. The way of action emphasizes hard work, honesty and believes every work when done well in accordance with His teachings, then one will also reach Him (Titib, 2011: 210).

Karma Yoga is part of the CaturMarga Yoga which explains the four paths to God. In etymology, Karma Yoga consists of two words namely “Karma” which means deed or work while Yoga means to connect with God. So what is meant by Karma Yoga is a way of connecting with God through unconditional work.

The teaching of Karma Yoga revolves around the way or way of achieving perfection of life by performing the work as required in accordance with everyone’s swadharma by not attaching himself to the outcome of his work. The perfection of life is to avoid the desire to gain reward from the results of work activities (Pendit, 1996: 85).

Every Hindu must believe that shraddha that will be felt in life if it is actually manifested in the form of work (karma) that is beneficial to life in the world and in heaven. That is why one’s judgment according to the Hindu view lies in the quality of his work. Thus, work is very fundamental and central in the system of Hindu teachings (Gorda, 2003: 5).

The word ‘work’ in Sanskrit comes from the word Kri, which means to do, act, execute (Surada, 2007: 99). Work is inevitable because it is a law of nature. Kri is a law of nature. Natural laws are inevitable. Suppose a man and all beings avoid to work, the world will be destroyed. According to Bhagavad-gita work is a disciplined life. A disciplined life is filial.

Bhagavadgita also explains that there are at least three working formulas outlined under the law of cause and effect. The first type is to work without expecting and counting rewards (karma). This is working as usual. Teachers teach at the school, mechanics work in workshops, fishermen work at sea, farmers work in the fields, and everything works. Work without expecting results. In Hinduism, it is known as Subha and asubha karma.

The second type is wrong to work (wikarma). The wrong work is lying. Lying is a work without hands and feet, but with intentions, desires and thoughts. Lying also causes and consequences, according to the laws of living discipline, the law of the discipline of the universe. Besides lying there is also cheating, doing evil, stealing, robbing, adultery, killing, doing immoral, and so forth. It’s all work. According to Bhagavad-gita such work is wrong to work, must be avoided and not implemented. Wikarma also means choosing a job and expecting a certain reward (Pidarta, 2005: 43).

The third type of work is a work called “do not work”. In Sanskrit, it is called akarma. So it does not work, same as free. Another example of Akbar is not the time to learn, do not want to do homework, do not want to carry out the tasks provided by educators and so forth. The type of work that Wikarma Karma or work incorrectly.

Through work, one can achieve the purpose of life and the essence of life incarnated as human (jagadhita and moksa). One cannot avoid work. Thinking (manacika), speaking (wacika) and performing (kayika) are forms of work. Work is any form of physical and/or non-
physical activity that a person undertakes to achieve the purpose of life, both heavenly and earthly. A man without work, everyday life is impossible, especially for the interests outside himself such as the interests of family, community, state, humanity and to God. Only through one’s work will be able to live better in the future (Gorda, 2003: 7). As described in the book of Bhagavadgita, III-.4, it is mentioned:

Na karmaGâmanârambhânnaishkar myampurusho ‘anute,
Na cha samnyasanâdevasiddhi Asamadhigachchati.

Translation:
People will not attain freedom because they do not work nor will they achieve perfection because they avoid work (Pudja, 2010: 80).

Based on the above sloka, freedom and perfection can be achieved only through work. Work is obligation, work is yajôa. Need to realize who one still live in this world, humans cannot be separated from work. Thinking, acting, doing anything is work. Man cannot avoid it because it is actually a natural law or a law of precancement. Work is a must for everyone. Let us examine together, people who do not work, just lazy life suffered, miserable life away from happiness. Versatile shortcomings, an insult to those around him. In addition to work as everyone’s swadharma, work can also improve the standard of human life. By working he is respected, by working he is respected, his life is happy away from suffering.

The teachings of Karma Yoga also teach that everyone has their assigned tasks and work according to their own talents and preferences. If one wants to succeed in the journey of life, whether involving personal interests, family, society, state or human beings, must work in accordance with the duties and obligations of each realized by the responsibility and professionally based on the truth. This is explained in the Bhagavadgita Book, III-8, as follows:

NiyataAkuru karma tvaA karma jyâyohyakarmaGa%,
‘arirayâtrâ ‘pi cha tenaprasidhye dakarmaGa%.

Translation:
Work as it is determined because the work is better than not working if you do not work everyday life is impossible (Pudja, 2010: 83).

Everyone has been determined the line of his life, everything has been arranged. So also about work, everyone has His swadharma, and his work respectively. The teachings of Karma Yoga in Bhagawadgita explain that we must work in accordance with our talents and abilities, this is better than not working. Work is a must for everyone. By working people can live and live the family. What is basically work which is a must? Being human in the world is living life as a human being in this mortal world. As a human being equipped with God’s special tools such as thoughts, feelings of ideals and conscience should behave differently from animals that are only controlled by instinct to carry out their lives. Humans with special tools that should take advantage of these tools to improve life and human life itself. In that way also arise culture in human life, something that makes people live more comfortable, more prosperous and happier although it can also cause misery of some human beings when the culture was misused in the negative direction.

Work according to world law is mandatory. Without work humans will not be able to develop the culture that resulted in his life still controlled by instinct alone. In addition, if humans do not take advantage of their special tools, they can be viewed as abusing God’s gift. Meanwhile, the act of insulting God is a sin.

All work must be in the spirit of devotion, devotion to God Almighty. Although the world
is shackled by the law of work, but if the work is carried out without the motive of self-interest, but for the sake of worship and dedication, the shackles no longer have the power of restraint. One duty that cannot be ignored by man is that he should worship the gods, Bharman’s manifestations in various functions. Carrying out is a human task in this life and this is called work and action. Every service and gift must be performed with a sacred heart and a spirit of sacrifice.

A good and virtuous person is a person who prefers worship rather than his own needs. In the above mentioned slokabawasannya, everyone works not only for his own interests, not tied to the results of his work. But the priority here is work as our bhakti form to God Almighty.

In the Bhagavadgita Book, III-14, which stated:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Annâdbhavantibhâtâniparjanyâdanna sambhawa\%,} \\
\text{Yajñâdbhavatiparjanyoyajña% karma samudhawa\%}
\end{align*}
\]

Translation:

Because food, living things, because of rain, food grows because of offerings, rain falls, and offerings are born because of work (Pudja, 2010: 87).

Based on the above sloka, doing Bhakti, life and Brahman have a close relationship. Humans and other living things need food to work. Food grows from the earth and requires rain. It rained because there was a human offering to Brahman. The most easily understood example is the greenery effort on barren and barren soil that initially no trees can grow. The spirit of devotion and offerings, planted trees to become forests, then the rain will fall there. With the water of creatures living and developing, well-being can be enjoyed. That is the cycle of life, devotion and Brahman, ending in prosperity and happiness if based on devotion.

### 2.2 Values Contained in the Teachings of Karma Yoga According to the Bhagavadgita

1) **Moral or Ethical Value in Life.**

Moral comes from the Latin word “mos” (plural “mores”) meaning custom or custom (Suhardana, 2010: 1). Ethics or morality in Hinduism is called susila. The word susila comes from the word “Su” and “sila”. Su means good and sila means habit or behavior of good human deeds.

Moral is the doctrine of good and evil, which concerns human behavior and deeds (Shudarta, 2007: 1). A person who is obedient to the rules and norms prevailing in his society. Morals in their manifestations can be rules, ethics, principles, right, good, praiseworthy and noble. Morals can be loyalty, obedience to the values and norms that bind the lives of people and nations.

Ethics is a form of self-control in the association of living together. In living together, human must regulate himself in behaving. No one can do as he wishes, he must adjust to his environment and submit to the rules. The rules of good behavior are called moral order. As it was pointed out in the Bhagavadgita, II-47, as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{k a r m a} & \text{ } \text{e} \text{v} \text{â} \text{d} \text{h} \text{i} \text{k à r} \text{a} \text{s} \text{e} \text{m ã} \\
\text{p h a l e} & \text{su} \text{k} \text{a} \text{d} \text{à} \text{ch} \text{a} \text{n} \text{a}, \\
\text{m ã} & \text{ } \text{k a r m a} \text{ } \text{p h a} \text{l} \text{a} \text{h} \text{t} \text{u} \text{r} \text{b} \text{h} \text{û} \text{r} \text{m} \text{a} \\
\text{t e} \text{s} \text{a} & \text{g} \text{o} \text{}' \text{s} \text{t} \text{v} \text{a} \text{k} \text{a} \text{r} \text{m} \text{a} \text{Gi}
\end{align*}
\]

Translation:

Your duty is now only acting and working with no expectation of results, not once reward be your motivation, do not just be silent to get your goal (Pudja, 2010: 61).

Sloka above explains, do not think of anything else besides the act, never think of the rewards, and do not let yourself seduced by passivity. God Himself does deeds. Neither as a macrocosm, through world events, nor as a microcosm in its incarnate form. The fact itself
will serve as a brilliant lesson. The tireless activity of the God who controls the universe is a routine thing, a kind of ritual that does not deeply concern God.

Only by working, human can achieve perfection. So we must also do the work with the aim for the maintenance of the world. Feeling that being blessed with a body, one can avoid involvement in the karmic network, it is a vain illusion. It is however possible to avoid binding engagements. It even opens up the possibility of unleashing the mind of unavoidable ties by the absolute sacrifice of self-interest. One does not seek any reward in the fulfillment of his duties as a son or a father, as a Bharmana or as a Ksatriya, in charity or in whatever else is a good work (Sudharta, 2007: 11).

The battle involving Arjuna is one of the holiest wars. Dhuryodana and his side are immune to moral persuasion. For Arjuna, in this situation, the attitude that permits consideration of personal feelings of incompetence or the feeling of showing a love for the family that undermines his will is clearly not only selfish but also an extreme confusion and weakness. Then he is urged to rise to the summit of sattwa for or pure awareness of obligation. Arjuna is arguing that he should not take the lives of his beloved close relatives. This is a worldly consideration. But there can be no worldly considerations that affect a person who is carrying out his obligations to the highest, and who should be totally under the total influence of the sattwaguna, freed from the karma of khanda. Under that influence, one does not think of the consequences of one’s own actions. He will throw all responsibility to the God. So God seems to take the whole load.

A sattwik or pure and unconditional duty does not distinguish special events or forms. Either the work is religious, military or philanthropic, whether it is a work of self-preservation or virtue. A pleasant or unpleasant work, a work of reward or punishment, whatever the form or whatever the reason, if it is free from the stain of egoism, and if it is done with the motive to perform the obligation to the highest, it is the sattwik action free from khandkharma-shaped cosmic consequences. This is the teaching of the Bhagavadgita.

2) Values of Service

The teachings of Karma Yoga on the Bhagawadgita book have a value of devotion to Atman. People who live with passionate devotion and are willing to sacrifice accept anything as Bharman’s grace is freed from the shackles of the bonds of work that make them unite with the Almighty. In a certain level of work is done the noblest person if exercised aimlessly to gain personal clout. The work done with a sense of devotion in the offering is far nobler than the work that lifts people on the purging and perfection of mind and soul. As explained in the Bhagavadgita book, III-19 is mentioned:

\[
\text{Tasmādāsaktaḥ satatākāryaḥ \ karm samāchāra,}
\]
\[
\text{Asaktoḥ yā chār am kār ma p a ramāṇāppnotipūrusha%}
\]

Translation:

Execute all work as a liability without any benefit because personal profit without personal gain brings people to the highest happiness (Pudja, 2010: 89-90).

Krishna declared himself an avatar of Bharman’s embodiment. He himself no longer has any interest except to form and direct human life to perfection and immortal happiness as well as to preserve and preserve this world from collapse. Everyone should work always based on devotion to Bharman. Understanding that basis, people will be free from the bond of work that sends the person to eternal happiness, confirming atman with Bharman.

3) Educational Value

The teaching of karma yoga educates everyone to work. Working in accordance with his talents and profession. The awards, status,
and position of a person according to Hinduism are based on his work performance, not based on his pleasure and displeasure. A person’s career in the world and in heaven is based on the quality of his work. By working, the person lives prosperous, lives happy, the person can support himself and his family. Work can also bring people to the freedom and perfection of life. There is an assumption to achieve freedom and perfection, one must stop all work. But the assumption is wrong, the freedom is not free without work, but free from the bonds of work. So is the perfection in question is not avoiding work activities, but avoid the desire to gain reward from work. In the Bhagavadgita, III-5, it is mentioned

\[ Na \ \text{hi} \ \text{kaschithkhsa} \ \text{Gamapijatuitsthatya} \ \text{karmakrit,} \n\]
\[ \text{K\=aryatehyavaa\=a} \% \ \text{karmasarva}\% \ \text{prakritijaigrGai}\% \]

Translation:

No one is not working, even for a moment. Because human power is acted by the law of nature (Pudja, 2010: 81).

Every human being cannot escape from work, thinking, saying, and acting of work because work is a law of nature or a law of prakriti. Someone does not cooperate with against natural law or precast laws.

4) Yaj\=oa Value

In general, yaj\=oa means sincere sacred sacrifice to Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa. For example by giving offerings, donating money, building the temple. Yaj\=oa is actually any kind of our actions that are done sincerely and unconditionally for the happiness of others and all creatures. This means that if one day we could help others even though with a word that can make people safe from danger, that’s yadnya. Based on the implementation, there are 5 yaj\=oa as described as follows: (1) DrwyaYaj\=o\=a means doing yaj\=oa with offerings in the form of objects or materials both embodied in the form of banten, funds and others. (2) Tapa Yaj\=o\=a means yaj\=o\=awhich is individual. The implementation of this Yaj\=oaemphasizes one’s effort to train oneself to establish a self-restraint attitude that aims to unite the atman with Bharman. (3) Yoga Yaj\=o\=a, this yaj\=oa is also individual yaj\=o\=abecause it contains the efforts of a person to connect with Bharman. (4) SwadhyayaYaj\=o\=a means the form of yaj\=oa by sacrificing oneself for the greater, noble, or ultimate interests. (5) JnanaYaj\=o\=a means yaj\=oa form of worship of science both worldly and spiritual (Subagiastra, 2008: 43).

Gorda (2003: 63), says that the offering (yaj\=oa) is a bridging or sacrifice made by someone to God. Someone is offering something to Him that they must dedicate their work as a manifestation of respect and gratitude to Him. This is done because God created the universe and its contents and then created human beings in the most perfect form compared to other creatures of God. God’s hope that humans in the utilization of the universe and its contents always maintain its sustainability to be a source of eternal life through work with the spirit of offerings (yaj\=o\=a). It is described in Bhagawadgita, III-10, as follows:

\[ Sahayaj\=n\=ahpraj\=a\=h\=srishtv\=âpu\=ro‘ \ v\=âcpr\=âj\=apat\=i\%, \n\]
\[ Anenaprasavishyadhvameshavo‘stvisthak\=amadhuk. \]

Translation:

Once upon a time, prajapati created human along with his offerings and said ‘by this offerings, you will breed and let this be your cow (Pudja, 2010: 84).

One duty that cannot be ignored is the worship of the Gods, the manifestations of Brahman in various functions. Doing yaj\=oa in life is called work. Yaj\=oa can be interpreted to remind every person in the process of life which is always done through work with the principle of offerings basen on the attitude and behavior of God in creating the universe and its contents
as well as creating human. While socially, offerings (yajóa) can be interpreted as a moral force to form human consciousness about life with an atmosphere of harmony, unity of life, and spirit for the benefit of others.

5) Professional Value

Incarnation as a human being was confronted with various problems, constraints, threats and colored by uncertainty. The uncertainty is caused by the rapid changes in various aspects of life. Such changes may occur due to human attitudes and behavior. This means because the attitude and behavior of humans themselves in responding to various information and environmental phenomenon in a time cause they are faced with the situation of failure, loss, sadness and so forth. On the other hand, humans are confronted with a situation of joy, pleasure, success, working without significant obstacles (Gorda, 2003: 24).

The environment both social and natural is dynamic and turbulent. This condition will not produce and give any benefits if people are lazy to work, avoid to work, avoid their responsibility, and so on. In the book of Bhagawadgita III-8 above, it is also described the principle of work devoted by God in relation to work for man. Everyone in this life has a job assignment that has been determined in accordance with his talent and choice since childhood. If a person wants to succeed in the journey of life (career), he must work in accordance with his duties and obligations based on responsibility and professionalism. Krishna suggested to Arjuna that he expected Arjuna to work and act as he had been appointed as a knight. God only gives love to those who work hard without divine despair and at the same time give the gift of success and happiness in his life, both worldly and heavenly.

III. Conclusion

Karma Yoga is part of CaturMarga Yoga which explains about the four paths to God. Etymologically, Karma Yoga consists of two words namely “Karma” which means deeds or work, while Yoga means connecting with God. The values contained in the teachings of Karma Yoga on the Bhagavadvita book are as follows:

(1) The moral value in life, the teaching of Karma Yoga is very important applied in everyday life. Moral is the doctrine of good and evil, which concerns human behavior and deeds. (2) The teachings of Karma Yoga on Bhagawadgita have a value of devotion to Atman. People who live with devout devotion and are willing to sacrifice accept anything as Brahman’s grace is freed from the bondage of work that makes them unite with the God. (3) The teaching of karma yoga also has the value of education that is to educate people to always work in their life. 4) The value of yajna, Doing yajna human task in life and this is called work. (5) Professionalistic value that every man should work in accordance with his talent as suggested by Krisna to Arjuna so that Arjuna work in accordance with the profession that is knight.

References


