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## "A STUDY OF NISHKAMAKARMAYOGA IN ARUN JOSHI'S SELECTED NOVELS"

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### Abstract:

*According to the Bhagavad Gita,  
“कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्तेमाफलेषु कदाचन । मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूमतिसंगोऽस्तु कर्माणि ॥ 47 ॥” Thy right is to work only;  
but never to the fruit thereof. Be thou not producer of the fruits of (thy) actions; neither let  
attachment be towards inaction (second canto). In this shloka it is mentioned that every  
person does his work from his birth till the end of his life.*

### KEYWORDS:

NishkamaKarmayoga , Novels , 'Nishkama Karma' , Literary.

### INTRODUCTION

The actions of a human being are called : "Karmas". Karmas or actions are of various types such as Akarma, Kukarma, Vikarma etc. Every 'Karma' gives some fruit, it may be good or bad. Every common man is always attached to the result of his "Karma" (action). He is not detached from his actions and results. An extra-ordinary person is not attached to his actions and results as he is detached from his actions.

The attachment and detachment of actions divides human beings into two groups of people, 1) Common man and 2) Extra-ordinary persons. The 'Karmayoga' (action) may be purposeful or purposeless, but the 'NishkamaKarmayoga' is beyond this. The 'Nishkama Karma' is not purposeful and purposeless but beyond both of them.

All novels of Arun Joshi focus on the theme of 'Karmayoga' and 'Nishkama Karma'. All his protagonists are doing different actions, both purposeful and purposeless. Therefore they are connected with 'Karmayoga' and 'Nishkama Karma'.

When the actions (Karma) are dedicated or sacrificed to God or Divine Power, from the heart and mind, the actions turn into 'NishkamaKarmayoga'. The dedication is very important in the 'NishkamaKarmayoga'.

The characters of Arun Joshi's novels are directly or indirectly involved in 'Karmayoga' and 'Nishkama Karma'. 'Karmayoga' is a positive approach in the life of human beings. 'Nishkama Karma' is the ultimate aim of human beings.

Arun Joshi's all novels are directly or indirectly connected into the 'NishkamaKarmayoga'. His 'The Foreigner' is from Existential to 'Karmayoga' and 'Nishkama Karma'. The Foreigner is primarily an attempt to explore the hazards (risk) of the having structure of existence. True happiness and real salvation are found; it is argued here, in one's relation with others. Person in communion with person can transcend his narrow, isolated selfhood and realise himself fully in a living dynamic reality. SindiOberoi is not only purposelessness of his life but also 'NishkamaKarmayogi'.

The Strange Case of Billy Biswas is second novel in which the normal and the abnormal, the ordinary and the extraordinary, illusion and reality, resignation and desire, 'Karmayoga' and 'NishkamaKarmayoga'. Billy Biswas returns to India after earning his Ph.D. in anthropology from U.S.A. He is as a "Strange Case" because of his quest for the truth and 'Nishkama Karma'.

The Apprentice is chronologically the third novel by Arun Joshi. RatanRathor is the hero of this

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work of fiction, is a 'home-spun' one. He is torn between the world of his father's idealism and mother's pragmatism. The novel deals with RatanRathor's adolescent innocence, manly experience and saintly expiation. He narrates the story of his life with Karmayoga and Nishkama Karma.

The Last Labyrinth is the fourth novel by Arun Joshi. It is a quest for meaning in life. SomBhaskar is little known of the problem of his identity. He does not go beyond his being attached his business, his inheritance and the family. SomBhaskar himself Leila Sabnis too is well trained in philosophy and psychology. Till the end SomBhaskar fails to get reconciled with the problems of life and death, science and religion, miracle and reason. At last his role is connected not only 'Karmayoga' but also 'Nishkama Karma'. In this way all Arun Joshi's novels are directly or indirectly justified to the 'Karmayoga' and 'NishkamaKarmayoga'.

Arun Joshi has focused not on social and political problems but on the deeper layers of human beings. All his novels are splendid, serious and powerfully disturbing. The novel's of Arun Joshi are the songs of the spiritual triumph of man despite the defeat of his physical power. spiritualism. All his novels are directly or indirectly concerned with karmayoga-nishkamaKarmayoga.

The doctrine of karma is based on the conviction that man's final growth rests with himself. Man can break with his past with concerted will and action. His growth is controlled by his own plans. He can attain not only 'Videhmukti (personal salvation) but also Sarvamukti (collective salvation). Man is a responsible agent who integrates Jn/ana and Bhakti yoga to find his own soul.

According to the Upanishads, this division of the supersensible and the sensible, proceeds from the animal faith to the divine faith, there is nothing like sensible or supersensible for life is one and integral i.e; karmayoga and Nishkamkarmayoga.

#### ARUN JOSHI AND HIS LITERARY CAREER:

Arun Joshi's protagonist overcome self-estrangement and social alienation once they are metaphysically reconciled to their world i.e. connected to 'Karmayoga' and 'NishkamaKarma'. RatanRathod kills his ego. Billy regains his subjectivity. Once the self-estrangement is dispelled; the protagonist finds himself harmoniously related to the other and thus overcomes social alienation. The title is very appropriate because it is very close to all human beings. Nonattachment is the central idea in the Bhagavad Gita. God is unattached because. He loves; that real love makes us unattached. Real love does not rest on physical attachment at all. It does not die and will never produce any painful reaction.

Nishkama Karma is not only workless: external passivity or idleness is the state of establishment in the experience that one is the Atman. It is pure spirit the uninvolved witness of passivity as well of activity of the body mind. The goal of karma is not karma but Nishkamkarma, worklessnees. Mukti or liberation is a state in which the soul is freed from all bondage and realisesits true nature.

Arun Joshi was bom at Banaras Uttar Pradesh on July 7, 1939. He was the youngest child in his family. Prof. A.C.Joshi was his father. He was vice - chancellor of Punjab University. Adviser in the Planning Commission and Vice Chancellor of Banaras Hindu University. He was married in 1964 to RukmaniLal.

He passed B.S. from Kansas University, U.S.A. 1959. He passed M.S. from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, U.S.A. 1960.

He joined The Delhi Cloth and General Mills Co-Delhi as Chief of its Recruitment and Training Department in 1961. He was Head of the DCM Co-Operate Performance AssessmentCell and Secretary. DMC Board of Management, he was theExecutive Director, Shri Ram Centre for Industrial Relations and Human Resources. He was associated with Shri. Ram Centre for Art and Culture and Hindu College, Delhi, as aMember of their Governing Bodies. After 1965, he setup his own industries. Diesel engines machine tools, foundry products and automotive parts are some of the products manufactured by his industries.

He has been writing novels and short stories for the last so many years. He has published the following books.

- 1)The Foreigner (Novel) 1968.
- 2)The Strange Case of Billy Biswas (Novel) 1971.
- 3)The Survivor (Collection of Short Stories) 1976.
- 4)The Apprentice (Novel) 1974.
- 5)LalaShri. Ram A Study in Entrepreneurship in Industrial Management (Business History) 1975.
- 6)The Last Labyrinth (Novel) 1980.
- 7)The City and The River Last Novel 1983, he was awarded the 'Sahitya Academy Award'.

### **The Bhagavad Gita And 'Nishkama Karmayoga'**

There are eighteen chapters in the Bhagavad Gita. We shall make a detailed study of 'Nishkama - Karmayoga' in chapter three and four.

Karmayoga may be broadly classified into four groups

- 1) Nishkama Karma
- 2) Bhagavat Pritikama - Karma
- 3) Prapatti Karma
- 4) Work as participation in divine Lila - Karma

'Nishkama Karma' means working without any motive. Swami Vivekananda calls it "Work for Work's sake." This is the path followed by seekers of knowledge. Three attitudes are possible in this path:

- 1) One is that held by the "Mimamsakas" who believe that everyone is bound to perform Vedic rituals, not with any ulterior motive; but because the Vedas have enjoined them. This idea was rejected by Hinduism long ago.
- 2) A second possible attitude is that of 'saksi' or witness. Here all karma is regarded as the inscrutable working of prakriti or the illusory working of Maya. 'I' is identified with the higher self and remains as a witness of all the bodily and mental changes.
- 3) The third attitude is to do work as 'yajna' or 'sacrifice'.

### **'Nishkama Karmayoga'**

'Nishkama Karma' is not only worklessness but also external passivity or idleness. It is the state of development in the experience that one is the Atman, the pure spirit, the uninvolved witness, of passivity as well as of activity of the body mind. Karma yoga is communion through action. Yajna means self sacrifice the offering of what one considers precious for the service of God and one's fellow beings. Nishkama karma yoga is near to various yajnas; They are roughly grouped as. Dravya - yajna (Sacrifice of material goods), Tapoyajna (sacrifice through austerity), yoga - yajna (sacrifice in the form of spiritual communion), Svadhyaya - yajna (sacrifice through religious study) and jnana - yajna (sacrifice constituted of knowledge). Arun Joshi's Protagonists as 'Nishkama Karmayogis'

Sindi Oberoi is the protagonist in Arun Joshi's The foreigner. Sindi Oberoi is a product of the crossroads of the West and the East. Sindi's dilemma is not only socio-psychological but also Nishkama Karma yoga. His Function throughout the novel is not only alienation but Nishkama karma yoga.

Billy Biswas is the protagonist in Arun Joshi's second novel The Strange Case of Billy Biswas. The deeper significance of the work can probably be discerned if it is explicated both as an indictment of the phony, hot shot, sordid, modern culture and as an embodiment of purush-prakriti unification, particularly in the context of Sankhya of philosophy.

The third novel The Apprentice is both a social document and a threnody (funeral song) of a tormented soul. In 'The Apprentice' the social reality becomes the nucleus of the novel and Ratan Rathor's story is a response to it and his consequent suffering and salvation. The novel enacts three stages in the human divine comedy of Ratan Rathor. The pre-independence period is the dawn, the period of idealism, the phase of innocence. The post independence India is the broad daylight of experience, the inferno of corruption. The last part is the door to the purgatory. All these three stages are directly or indirectly concerned with 'Karmayoga' and 'Nishkama Karmayoga'.

The Last Labyrinth is the fourth novel of Arun Joshi. This novel absorbs the existential anxiety, the Karmik principles, the longing for the vitals of life in the mystical urge of Som Bhaskar. Bhaskar is a modern 'anti-hero' embodying chaos and uncertainty. Bhaskar is a modernized secularized, empiricised, skeptical Nachiketa. Who has been denied the faith of resolution of the Upanishadic model. Bhaskar does not know what lies in the last labyrinth.

All the four protagonists, Sindi Oberoi, Billy Biswas, Ratan Rathor and Som Bhaskar are akin in their predicament, their torture and agony. Arun Joshi's consciousness and 'Nishkama Karmayoga' are steeped as much in Indian ethos as in the teaching of The Bhagavad Gita. All his heroes are both picaroes and pilgrims - Picaroes in their wanderings and pilgrims in their search for the meaning of karma.

Bill Biswas is the archetypal purush who finds prakriti in Bilasia. His alienation and Nishkama karma from the civilized world leads him to explore the dark mossy labyrinth of his soul that longs for an identity, a god head.

RatanRathor comes to move towards a meaning, 'To know good and to know a meaning' 'to know good and to know evil and to choose evil and what betrayal of the soul is there' Karma yoga is contained in both of them but Nishkama karma is beyond both of them.

The Last Labyrinth illumines fresher perspective on the earlier novels because it explores the angle of alienation. The opposing worlds of science, religion, doubt and faith, East and West, Darwin and Krishna, find congruent pictorial articulation through the juxta position of paradoxical symbols and the pervasive image of the labyrinth.

All novels of Arun Joshi are not only near to human predicament and meaninglessness but also Nishkama karma yoga. The sense of meaninglessness is the most dominant feature of human condition in the contemporary epoch. Modern man has been discussed by See man under a set of five inter-related operational conditions VIZ. Powerlessness, formlessness, (isolation, self estrangement and meaninglessness.

Arun Joshi is a departure from the social realism of the early Indo- Anglican writers. He concentrates more on the interiority of experience than on depicting surface reality. He is concerned with the quest for meaning in life, He is like kafka and camus, Sartre and saulBelw, Elison and Malamual.

Arun Joshi's First novel, The Foreigner (1968) explores the problems of SindiOberoi, Sindi is always lonely and ill at ease in the world. He belongs to no country and to no people. He regards himself as, "an uprooted young man living in the latter half of the 20th century." He goes to Boston where he meets Jane, an attractive American young woman. He has a short lived but passionate love affair with her. He is trapped in his own loneliness. His alienation is of the soul and not geography.

This novel of Arun Joshi explores the deep significance of primitive life as a much better and healthier alternative to out civilized through imperfect society. Tula Lindgreen, who is a Swedish girl friend of Billy; prompts him to opt for anthropology. Later he marries Bilasia; a tribal beauty Tragically enough Billy is ultimately hunted down and killed and only his ashes reach the civilized world.

This novel in the form of monologue. It treats of the past memories of RatanRathod who narrates them to his student companion. In India he comes into contact with Himmat Singh called Sheikh with whom he signs a deal of takes a bribe for the purchase of war material. He is attested and remains in prison for sometime. Having viewed his rapid moral downfall in the background of his glorious heritage, he becomes an apprentice to his moral and spiritual reconstruction and begins to learn "to be of use".

SomBhaskar is the protagonist in this novel. He is an industrialist married to Geeta a woman of his choice His desire to know is a labyrinth. He seeks to overcome his hunger by possessing an object; a business enterprise, a woman. He meets Anuradha and later Gauri. After the disappearance of Anuradha he prays for forgiveness.

SindiOberoi, Billy Biswas, RatanRaghad and somBhaskar are akin in their predicament, their torture and agony. All his heroes are both pica roes and pilgrims.

Sindioberoi is the protagonist. He is a man totally alienated from his surroundings and society. He gets over his inner pricks and the hope of successful, cheerful life brightens up.

Billy or BimalBiswas is the Central Character and whole novel rotates round him. The child of Nature (Billy) joins the primitive community of tribals in central India and lives happily. There with Bilasia. He is definitely a "Strange case" for the Psycho-analysts and karma yoga.

RatanRathod goes to Delhi to make his career. He rises to a special assistant and finally becomes an officer of the Government of India. He becomes a cheat, a bribe taker, a money-maker, a drunkard a womanizer So he is called Mr. Crisis of Character.

This novel is dedicated to his three children. SomBhaskar is the Protagonist He is married to a woman of his choice, Geeta who has borne him two children. Bhaskar is an ever dissatisfied, restless person. He is relentlessly or mercilessly driven by undefined hungers of possession of an object a business enterprise and a woman.

The novel of Arun Joshi hover between the opposing pulls of attachment and detachment, action and inaction, love and hate, possessiveness and dispossession, down to earth materialism and eternity bound urges of spiritualism and karma yoga i.e. 'NishkamaKarmayoga'.

### **The Bhagavad Gita as a great Spiritual work**

The Bhagavad Gita deals with a practical problem of life, how a man could discharge his duties as a member of an imperfect social order. The Bhagavad Gita there fore begins with an ethical problem and in solving this problem, a devotional philosophy is expounded.

The Theory of 'NishkamaKarmayoga' :

The doctrine of Nishkama karma is the doctrine of actions done with detachment and in dedication to the Lord. Natures cataclysm with their terriblydestructive effect cannot classified as moral or immoral

kamya-karma can take two forms 1) Vikarma of Nisiddha karma 2) 'Nishkama Karma'. Vikarma is an anti-social work which is done by persons with devilish nature. 'NishkamKarma' is a Dharmika work which is done by persons with divine nature.

The Bhagavad Gita must be given recognition to as an Upanisad and as Brahma Vidya a scripture that shatters ignorance and gives the knowledge of Brahman.

The Bagavad Gita consists of all yoga's i.e. Jnanayoga, karma yoga, Raja yoga and Bhakti yoga.

The Four novels of Arun Joshi have been mentioned earlier. We have learnt about the protagonists. The role of karma yoga and Nishkama karma have been dealt with.

The Protagonists as 'NishkamaKarmayogis'.

Mr. Sindi Oberoi is the protagonist. He is studied as a Nishkama karma yogi. He is not only a karma yogi but also a Nishkama karma yogi because he is free from attachment.

Billy or Bimal Biswas is the Protagonist. He is not attached in money or power but is attached to the community of tribal so his mind's function is close to karma yoga and Nishkama karma.

Ratan Rathor as the protagonist. He is a Nishkama Karma yogi. He practices a philosophy that works in practical life. Purification is to be attained not by sadhana or ritual but by karma or karma yoga.

The novel presents Som Bhaskar as the protagonist. He has become a labyrinth. He is an Archetypal character. His mind's labyrinth is directly or indirectly connected with karma yoga and Nishkama karma.

#### CONCLUSION :

The four novels present the protagonists as 'NishkamaKarmayogis'. The novelist has progressed from Sindi's search for self to Billy's search for true self and from Ratan's cry of conscience to Bhaskar's cry of consciousness. Directly or indirectly, they are karmayogis and believers of 'Nishkama Karma'.

There are four paths - (I) Work Karmayoga (II) Love - Bhakti Yoga, (III) Psychology - Raj Yoga and (IV) Knowledge - Jnyanayoga. All the four paths converge together and become one.

The NishkamaKarmayoga of the four protagonists has its own different shades. They are directly or indirectly exponents of Karma yoga and Nishkama karma yoga.

The Ethical Significance of Nishkama Karma Yoga in Arun Joshi's Works. 'Karmayoga' is attaining freedom through unselfish work. That which is selfish is immoral and that which is unselfish is moral. The Theory of 'Karmayoga' and 'NishkamaKarma' are explained in the novels.

'Nishkama Karma' is the goal of all religions and all human beings in the world. Once attained, we are free from all attachment and detachment. This Ultimate Universal Truth gets manifested in Arun Joshi's four novels.

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