

# A Question of *Karma Yoga*

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**Jack:** Dear Ted, I have been studying Vedanta for just a very short time now, but I believe I understand the basics and I have been practicing *karma yoga* since the beginning of my study.

I admit I do not understand self-knowledge at this point. I have completed the *Tattva Bodha* course on Vishnudeva's channel, but feel that I have some work to do.

Recently I have been discussing Vedanta on a self-development forum, and attempting to submerge myself in the teaching of *karma yoga* by responding to people in need of basic everyday problems by discussing how I feel *karma yoga* is changing my mind for the better.

However, despite having helped a fair amount of people and maybe introduced a few to Vedanta in the process, I have received some flack on the forum too.

I got some caustic comments from a guy to whom I had commented on one of his posts. I didn't think I was particularly off. I was just putting across information a little like James would, but maybe I pissed the guy off because he may have been looking for pity (he mentioned to another poster and thanking him for "caring," which I thought was a bit soppy for a forum). But I digress. I sent him an email through the private messaging system because I thought I might have been insensitive a little to his depression. He responded well, and I said I would send him some Vedanta links as a way of saying sorry.

Later on he gave me some grief publicly. It was no big deal, but I do have a habit of closing down in hurt. In the past I have been an emotional mess, but through therapy I have slowly got my ego where I think it should be for beginning spiritual work. So the comment annoyed me a little (especially as I'm now making great efforts with *karma yoga* and also am feeling pretty good after applying the teaching from Christian Leeby's book to gain the qualifications), but I didn't go off the rails too much. However, even though the reaction to this guy's insensitivity brought up a familiar wound, I also wonder if my reaction was perhaps really appropriate in light of what I am learning about *Isvara*? Was my reaction appropriate in the sense that *Isvara* is delivering his *karma* through me as an instrument of facilitation? If this is the case, then how do I make sense of this in light of working on the mind to gain the qualifications?

The forum is not the issue, but the old wound is. I'm happy to keep working on myself to get the qualifications, but I want to get your perspective on what these wounds mean for the whole? I get that the "whole" is a concept, but as a *jiva* I'm not yet ready for that insight yet. I'm more interested in becoming a *karma yogi*, and really mastering this object-world first.

I forgot to mention that my feelings around this guy made me withdraw my offer of support for his plight, and I moved away from contact with him, as I now view him as someone that is not conducive to my well-being.

I realize that this situation is small fry, but it's just a micro example of what is happening in my whole life. Not that I am suspicious of people, I give the benefit [of the doubt], but usually when somebody hurts me I tend not to continue with contact. I've found it hard in the past to forgive, but

now I have Christian's book I'm well on the path to really getting my mind polished!

Your insight on this would be much appreciated!

~ Jack

**Ted:** Hi, Jack.

I'm not sure what you mean by your reaction being "appropriate in the sense that *Isvara* is delivering his *karma* through me as an instrument of facilitation."

In terms of *karma yoga*, the only issues here are whether you are offering your actions to the *dharma* field (i.e. as an offering to *Isvara*, which is the personification of the *dharma* field, or the manifest universe in both its subtle and gross aspects) and are accepting the results of your actions as a gift from God. It sounds like you may still be attached to the results of your actions in that you expect the person to react to your actions in a certain way.

As you have described them, the facts of the situation are that you offered the person an insight that upset him. You didn't intend to upset the person and even attempted to rectify the situation. If that doesn't mollify the person's anger, there is nothing you can do about it. You are only responsible for your intention. All you can really do now is accept the results as appropriate for the situation. Understanding the logic underpinning the *karma yoga* attitude – that is, the fact that ample evidence suggests that the *dharma* field is a grand organic mechanism whose operation is governed by an intrinsic self-sustaining design that enables it to spontaneously reconfigure its impersonal, inviolable and infallible network of cause-and-effect occurrences in such a way as to serve the best interests of the total – will help immensely in facilitating your acceptance of the immediate apparent injustice of any given result.

In order to not exacerbate negativity, it is perhaps wise to cease communication with the person until you have processed the hurt his response has caused you and have resolved your own upset.

~ All the best, Ted