

Beautiful *Karma-Dharma Yoga*

Ram (James Swartz)

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This short excellent synopsis of karma yoga was written by a twenty-something student of Vedanta. Karma yoga is the practice of choice for busy worldly people who want to know who they are.

Disarm the Tiresome Urge to Manipulate

“Now listen to the wisdom of *yoga* which will free you from bondage to action. In this *yoga*, no effort is wasted, nor are any unsuitable results produced. Even very little *karma yoga* protects one from great fear.” ~ *Bhagavad Gita*

The topic of *karma yoga*. Endlessly repeat it. People go to a *yoga* class to feel good, but not to gain the understanding that they are good. To explain that you are the endless source of goodness itself is too subtle of an investigation for many at the beginning of their spiritual lives. This leads us to the subject of *karma yoga*.

Karma yoga is the best way to purify and qualify the mind for liberation. Irrespective of the type of activity you perform, it is a practical practice that accommodates all temperaments. Whether you are like that Mexican mouse Speedy Gonzales (*rajasic* in nature) or dull like Eeyore the donkey (*tamasic*), no problem, *karma yoga's* got your back!

Not only does it prepare the mind to reflect and contemplate subtle investigations like “what is liberation and how can I realize my limitless nature?” it also provides the platform for a practical lifestyle. *Karma yoga* in conjunction with *guna* management (*triguna vibhava yoga*) is the springboard to liberation. But let's put liberation aside for now.

What is *karma yoga*? *Karma yoga* is the understanding that the person (*jiva*) has the right to act but is not the dispenser of the results. He/she performs appropriate and timely action whilst understanding that the results are dished out according to the needs of the total. The total cares no more for the *jiva* than it does for the microbiome critters that call your body home. Sometimes you get what you want and sometimes not.

Understanding that the results are not up to the person gives the doer of the action peace of mind; this in turn allows the action figure to maintain a clear (*sattvic*) mind for the application for moment-to-moment self-inquiry.

A mature person who has investigated the nature of experience comes to terms with how things work on this island of duality (*mithya*). For every upside there is a downside and for every downside there is an upside.

Understanding that everything on this island is freely given, one can ask, “What is left to do but receive everything as a blessing (*prasad*) – including the not-so-pleasant experiences?” *Karma yoga* is an attitude of gratitude.

Since grade school we have all heard the saying “for every action there is a result.” This is true. Punch the wall and your hand will get sore. Give the poor beggar under

the bridge a hot meal and the result is a warm fuzzy feeling of virtue. Indeed, certain actions – backed up by previous experience – will produce obvious results, but this is not always the case. Give the poor beggar under the bridge a hot meal and the result is a collapsing bridge on your head, the point being that you are not in charge of what happens next. How is it possible to secure something that is by nature totally insecure, a world of constant unrest? You can't. But you can rest your mind.

By the understanding/acceptance of uncertainty, *karma yoga* disarms the tiresome urge to try to manipulate situations. You perceive all results equanimously neither worrying about what was, is or what is to come. Your precious energy is reserved for steady self-investigation.

“You can choose which actions you wish to perform but you have no control over the results. Don't think of yourself as the author of the results of your actions and don't be attached to inaction. Remain steadfast in *yoga* and act without attachment to the results. Remain the same in success and failure alike. This steadiness of mind is called *yoga*.” ~ *Bhagavad Gita*

It is important to note that the person does have authority with regard to acting appropriately and timely (*dharmic* action). So how do we apply this *karma-dharma yoga*? We do exactly that, act appropriately, in a timely fashion and accept what comes as a blessing. Perform action in accordance with *dharma* and make peace of mind your quest at all times. It is a simple methodology but not an easy one. It requires a mature attitude.

Karma yoga is practical investigation. What have you done to be here right now? Are you needing to make an effort to illumine the eye-equipment to read these lines? Are you needing to remind your lungs to keep expanding and contracting, supplying life-sustaining oxygen to your body and removing from it a waste product called carbon dioxide? Who blinks the lashes and keeps the tongue moist for that sense pleasure called taste?

Is it not amazing how each thing in life is so perfectly jibed?! Any healthy-minded person – with common sense – is able to work out the fact that EVERYTHING has, and continues to be, freely handed to them. This understanding brings about a beautiful quality called appreciation, and appreciation results in good manners. Good manners is following *dharma*, the natural universal laws. As the thirteenth-century Zen teacher Dogen said, “Next to good manners enlightenment is the most important thing in the world.” Enlightenment has no meaning apart from how you live. *Karma-dharma yoga* is simply good manners.