

# ***Jnana Karma Sannyas* Is an Attitude of Gratitude**

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2014-11-04

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/1887>

**Harrison:** *Namaste!*

Thanks very much. I have been reading quite a bit about *karma yoga* recently and trying to apply it where you describe. To be clear, I wasn't looking for specific guidance on the situation I referenced, so we are on the same page there. However, where I may not have been clear was on what my question regarding what exactly it means to have the "attitude of gratitude" at a more detailed level than the topic is typically dealt with. To make it concrete, let me give you an example of two ways one could think about a complex decision that has large "apparent" impacts, e.g. a major financial decision.

Version A: Person thinks "Thank you, *Isvara*, for my life and this situation... I am going to put as much energy as possible into thinking about the situation and leveraging the mind that you've given me. If that means staying up all night running different analyses, etc., I will do it because these decision-making steps are an offering to you and I want to be as thorough as possible." Note that in this case the person is applying quite a bit of energy to an important decision but the mind may/will become stressed and agitated as it tries to consider all dimensions of the problem and think through all possibilities.

Version B: Person thinks "Thank you, *Isvara*, for my life and this situation... I am going to calmly think through what to do in a moderate and balanced way. In the end, you will provide the result and I will accept what comes as your *prasad*." Note that in this case the person will not apply as much energy to analyzing the aspects of the decision and consequently may make a less informed or "worse" decision. On the other hand, the person will have relatively less mental agitation/stress as compared to the previous situation because a more relaxed and less mentally-rigorous approach is being applied. Do you see what I'm getting at? I hope I am more clear this time... I guess another way of asking the question is, to what degree does the *karma yoga* attitude obligate us to work hard/carefully in an effort to make our work the "best" it can be?

~ Regards, Harrison

**Sundari:** Yes I understand where you are coming from. The answer to both instances is the same. *Karma yoga* and "an attitude of gratitude" does not preclude action. In the apparent reality it is very possible to get the result one wants with appropriate action. If this was not the case success at anything would not be possible. There is nothing wrong with desiring a particular result and taking action to attain it. In fact, if you don't take action to attain it you most likely will not get it. For instance, if you want to become a doctor and you sit back saying, "Okay, *Isvara*, I will leave it up to you," obviously, you will not become a doctor anytime soon. If you want to achieve a specific business ideal, the same applies. An attitude of gratitude is taking the appropriate action knowing that the results are not up to you - so dedicating all your actions to *Isvara*, before you take them, and then taking the results that do come as *prasad*.

With *karma yoga* it is not action that one gives up but the idea of doership. This is *jnana karma sanyass*. Anxiety and stress only come from being attached to or concerned about the result of any action, which means discrimination and dispassion are missing. It takes a great deal of time, energy and thought to become something like a doctor. It takes knowledge and expertise to make good business decisions of whatever kind. It is the quality of mind one brings to action that makes the difference and where the freedom lies. If in the planning and execution of taking an action one observes the mind getting agitated, take note that *rajas* is operating. Stop, step back. See if you are not overdoing things and where you have lost dispassion and discrimination.

When *rajas* predominates, the mind cannot observe itself. It is caught up in the future, the thought that things need to be different, so the mind acts to correct the situation, usually in negative ways. It does not act to correct itself. If, on the other hand, you observe the mind is dull and unresponsive, take note that *tamas* is operating and you need time out, rest. When *tamas* predominates, the mind is too dull to discriminate. When *sattya* (the true nature of the mind) predominates, the mind becomes clear and one is able to see the natural order of things. When the mind is *sattvic* again every action taken will be with the right attitude. Then you do what it takes knowing that the results are in good hands and give thanks.

I hope this helps.

~ *Namaste*, Sundari