

**THE WAY OF SADHANA
KARMA YOGA**

LESSON TWO

Dear Member
Greetings,

As we study the Law of Karma, we must keep in mind that there is always a CAUSE for every EFFECT that we experience. Unfortunately, we are more inclined to give attention to the EFFECT that is taking place, rather than to examine the CAUSE of that EFFECT. This is due to our ignorant acceptance of fate. Most individuals truly believe that the incidents of joy and sorrow, which come into their lives daily, are arbitrary happenings over which they have little or no control. It is as if we believe that life is as totally unpredictable as the weather. Some days the sun will shine, while on others we will be caught beneath the rain clouds that sneak up on us unexpectedly.

All too often, we view the incidents in our life as if we were an innocent party to the CAUSES, which brought them about. As Sadhanists, we cannot afford to be content with the belief in fate or accept every EFFECT that comes along. We have to become like the scientist, the philosopher and the mystic, who are able to stop long enough as they labor with the EFFECTS, to ask questions about the ORIGINAL CAUSE.

Whenever early man was unable to understand or discover the real cause of the many common occurrences in his life, he attributed all the EFFECTS, which he could not explain to mythological or superstitious

CAUSES. He conveniently invented a multitude of Gods out of every manifestation of nature, attributing to each one of them the power of good or evil, depending upon his accumulated experiences with these mysterious manifestations. For example: When the tree gave fruit or when the wood gave fire in the cold of winter, it was believed that the "Tree God" looked kindly upon him. At other times his experiences were different; a rotting branch from the tree would fall destroying his campsite. At another time, early man saw with his own eyes how the "Tree God" could get angry with the person climbing its branches. If it got angry enough, it would throw the climber out of its arms, crashing him to the ground. These occurrences were a vivid indication to him that the "Tree God" was angry. The balmy breezes were looked upon as kind and gentle, while the powerful wind and lightening seemed to seek him out for specific punishment. His Gods were either bestowing blessings upon him for his past good deeds, or they were punishing him for violating some unknown law.

Eventually, man put away his variety of Gods and accepted the idea of one single God. This indeed was an advancement in his thinking, but it did not automatically wipe out all of the old beliefs and superstitions. Now he believed in one God who created all things, a God who was perfect and good – except when he was displeased. He also believed that God wanted to bestow happiness, health and success upon everyone – except the unworthy. If God was displeased with certain parents, he gave them crippled, sickly or ugly children. Overall, early man felt that as long as he was able to do God's bidding, God would be kind to him. But if he disobeyed God, he would be punished.

The unreal belief that God is both good and evil, forgiving and unforgiving has never been entirely eliminated from modern religions. Most

religions still teach the idea that God is jealous and vengeful. This false belief has always been looked upon as totally unacceptable by the True Spiritual Teacher. Because of ignorance, man held the erroneous belief that if God created everything, He must have also created "Satan," the God of evil. The Great Spiritual Teachers on the other hand, attempted to show that it was unnecessary to attribute all of the evil that existed in the world to an evil or vengeful God. Instead, they pointed out that MAN WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS OWN CREATED EVIL.

The Ancient Teachers have always taught that ALL OF CREATION IS PERFECTLY CREATED, and this Divine Creation, was established in Peace and Harmony. Man is a part of the Divine Universe. As a Co-Creator with God, he is endowed with the Power of Free Will. Because of Free Will, man has the choice of working in Harmony with the Perfection of the Universe, or he can choose to go contrary to its Peaceful and Harmonious Intent – when he does this, THE RESULT IS A SELF-CREATED EVIL. There is no exception to Divine Law; its Perfection is permanent and immutable. If man chooses to violate the natural Order of Perfection that violation will automatically bring about a negative result. GOD HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH IT. Man alone, is responsible for his ignorance and self-limiting choices of action.

Karma Yoga is a system of teachings, which is intended to make us aware of our Oneness (union) and our responsibility for everything that we think and do. We exist as Co-Creators with the Divine, but more importantly, WE WERE INTENDED TO BE PERFECT CO-CREATORS. The sooner we realize that we deserve the EFFECT of everything we create, the more we will be inclined to "think before we act." The more we recognize that all of the Blessings of the Universe are at our disposal, the less we will

be inclined to go contrary to the Peaceful and Harmonious Creation of the Divine Creator.

We will obtain our greatest results when we learn how to work and act. All work and action involves manifesting the Power of Mind, which is already inside of every person. Remember, you are One with Divine Knowledge, but you can never bring out this Power without dedicated work and effort. It just does not happen by itself; not anymore than feeding the body would take place without your willful and physical effort to feed it. This Power lies dormant within you and your dedicated work and actions are the stimulus that CAUSES this Power to awaken and come forth.

There cannot be work or action without some kind of motive, and the motives are endless. Some people will work all of their lives for fame and recognition. Others have a burning desire to accumulate money and power, and they work for it with all of their energy. In the past, the members of the Egyptian Nobility were so intent on perpetuating their names, that they worked all of their lives preparing and building great tombs for themselves. These tombs were to serve as a reminder of their greatness, even after death. Each tomb was designed to be greater and finer than any other tomb in existence. At other times in history, individuals have spent the greater portion of their lives doing work as a penance to alleviate the wickedness of their past deeds. Many of the great churches and temples of the world were built by such sponsors, in the hope that it would obtain for them a "Passport to Heaven." Some people still believe that this kind of beneficence can be used in payment for any past wickedness. By doing such work, they feel that they will be able to go scot-free in spite of their former selfish acts.

History is filled with such examples, but the limited motive behind such action can prove to be more harmful than good. The desire to do good in the name of religion is an excellent example of a self-serving motive. The desire to save souls and make all of mankind bow down to one theological idea was the CAUSE of the Spanish Inquisition. The EFFECT of such a "holier than thou" motive, brought about an unbelievable inhumanity to man. Political systems are always sold with the idea that they are for the good of all mankind. And yet, because of such political systems, mankind has experienced an endless chain of genocidal acts, which has destroyed millions of human lives in the last fifty years. The self-serving action of one single fanatic, who tries to impose his belief upon others, invariably brings about a tremendous injustice. Unfortunately, we are living in an age where various branches of society have been elevated to such a height that no one dares question the motive or intent of their actions. The changes that are taking place in our educational systems and our sciences are well intended, but if these changes are not directed and controlled, we will all fall prey to their misdirected and self-serving ends. The desire to do good is always the motive given for any change that is forced upon humanity. But, we have watched the result of such goodness in the last fifty years, and we have seen the world pass from a relatively tranquil place, to a world filled with societies that are confused, polluted, misdirected and on the verge of great and violent results – all of this brought about by people who thought they were doing good. Henry Thoreau, once wrote:

"There is no odor so bad, as that which arises from goodness tainted. If I knew for certain that a man was coming to my house with the conscious design for doing me good, I would run for my life."

There is a great difference between “doing good” and “being good.” It is a waste of time to sit back and dream of doing good for everyone, while at the same time we have not learned to express the Goodness of the Real Self. We cannot truly serve mankind, while at the same time we remain weak and self-serving. There have always been do-gooders, people who are so concerned with expounding and perpetuating their own little truths that they create an evil more insidious than the problem that they started out to solve. One of our main problems, is that we have become a little misguided and naïve about the value of our scientific and social achievements. Every great civilization has believed that they were capable of solving all of man’s problems. Unfortunately, most of these civilizations have passed away and the problems remain unsolved. We have forgotten how to WONDER and be AWARE of the Divine Heritage of Excellence which we have received from God and the Universe.

Karma Yoga shows us how we can regain some of our original child-like joy and how we can re-sensitize our sense of Wonder and Awareness. When we learn to work and act unselfishly, we will begin to find our Real Purpose for existence. We must learn to act and do – AS GOD WOULD DO IT. There are some in every country who have learned to work unselfishly in this way. They do not care for name or fame, nor do they work to achieve Heaven or Nirvana. They work with unselfish love and understanding, expecting nothing in return. Their only motive is to be an example for others to follow. In either case, the Law of Karma is actively working. If our motive is for name and fame, and if we work for it hard enough, we will reap the result of our work. The result will be the Karma of our action – good or bad. If a person works without any selfish motive, they also reap the result of their Karma. They gain the Highest Reward.

Unselfishness is far more rewarding than any other form of action – but very few people have the patience to practice it. The reward is not only Spiritual, but its effect is also physical even from a health point of view. Unselfishness in Love and Truth, are not merely moralistic figures of speech. When they represent our Highest Motive and Ideal, they will fill us with a Perfect and Pure Manifestation of Divine Power.

The first pre-requisite of Karma Yoga, is self-control. Many individuals are so fearful of making a mistake in their thoughts and actions that they choose to become creatures of in-action. Little do they know that the choice for in-action or non-action requires as much work and Willful Effort as does action itself. **Willful non-action is also Karma.** The effect of non-action is a life of fear and wasted energy. The non-active person becomes a burden to themselves and to the rest of mankind. As human beings, we cannot avoid action or the result of our action. The real solution is not a Willful attempt to do nothing, but rather the Willful desire to express the Unselfish and Divine Perfection of Life Itself. This requires Real Self-Control over the little self.

The Ancient Forest Teachers, tell us that anyone who can work for five days without manifesting any selfish motive what so ever, will achieve Union with God. Whoever is able to work and act freely, without ever thinking of the future, without ever desiring anything of personal gain, without the desire of heaven or the fear of damnation, free of every limitation of the little self; this individual has the capacity to become a Powerful Spiritual Giant. To achieve this, is not easy. It requires tremendous effort and restraint of the ego – the little self. Real self-restraint requires that we call into being all of the Power at our disposal and Willfully use it upon ourselves to manifest the tremendous action of self-restraint.

THE PHYSICAL BODY AND ITS EGO ARE NOT THE REAL SELF. They are merely a vehicle for the Greater Expression of Divine Power. An automobile may rush down the mountainside unrestrained, but the person in the driver's seat always has the power to stop it and bring it under control. The free wheeling automobile is simply moving, but the person in the driver's seat must Willfully act to control the movements of the automobile. Now ask yourself, which is the greatest Power – the unrestrained movement of the automobile, or the Willful control of its movement? All actions whether physical or mental, produce an outgoing energy, which can be controlled and directed. If it is not directed, it will simply scatter in all directions producing an endless array of EFFECTS, which we have never dreamed of or desired. This is what happens when we allow the outgoing energy to be influenced by selfish and petty motives. A little bit of the energy will produce limited and petty results, while the greater portion of the energy will be frittered away. By Total Control of each thought and deed, by restraining the self-limiting desires of the ego and the little self, we are able to manifest a Greater Expression of Human Perfection.

As we practice self-control, we also strengthen the Power of our Will. This Mighty Power of Will can transform a sleeping character or personality, into a Christ or a Buddha. Always remember, that the Power is constantly flowing through every human being. This Power will be influenced by our limited and selfish desires, or it can be Willfully manifested into a Greater Power. Foolish men and women may not know the Secret of Divine Control, but never the less, they want to rule mankind. Even fools may be able to rule the whole world, if they are willing to Willfully Direct all of their works and energies toward that end. The Spiritual person on the other hand, does away with the foolish idea of political control, and instead directs All Power to a Higher Good. In this way, the Spiritual Giants become the Greatest

Power in the World. The world of the foolish man is small and limited. His visions are restricted by his desires for power and fame. He may indeed achieve his limited goal, but in the end, the Karma of his actions will weaken his self-created empire and render his Will powerless to achieve the Ultimate Goal of Perfection.

Man was created to be CONSCIOUSLY ACTIVE in the world. It is for this reason that we should recognize the great value in all work. Even the lowest forms of work afford us an opportunity to expand and grow, when we understand that even menial work can be enhanced by our Higher Willful Motives. The type of work does not necessarily make one individual superior to another. The Dedicated street-sweeper can perform a greater service to mankind than the bank executive, whose only intent is to accumulate wealth at the expense of others and for his own exclusive purposes. In like manner, we should not concern ourselves with the false notions of social acceptability, which can only lead us down the path of limited action, motivated by the little ego. The Spiritual person, who wishes to help another, never takes into account what that other person's attitude will be toward him. If you want to do a great and good work, do not trouble yourself thinking about what other people's response will be toward what you are doing. Do your work unselfishly – and let your work stand on its own merit.

We must always work. We cannot live for one minute without work. As you observe Life, you will discover that it appears to be two-sided. On one side, it seems to be a life of struggle and intense activity in which we feel as though we are caught in a whirlwind, rapidly being bounced about. On the other side of life, we experience the Natural Calm, where everything is Peaceful and Harmonious. This is also experienced in the vast grandeur of

nature's panorama, filled with animals, flowers, mountains and running brooks, all sharing a Oneness of Expression. Certain individuals will experience this second side of nature in the quiet atmosphere of a Temple or Cathedral, where there is very little noise or show, but neither of these are the ideal to be strived for. A person who is accustomed to the solitude, can be in great danger when they are brought in contact with the surging whirlpool of social living. This individual can easily be crushed by the pressures of life's struggle. An individual, who has become accustomed to the turmoil and the rush of life in a big city, finds it difficult to be at ease in a quiet place. They suffer physically and mentally because of the lack of pressure, in the same way as the fish suffers who lives deep beneath the waters of the sea, when deprived of the weight of the water on him. As soon as the fish is brought to the surface, its internal organs feel as though they are breaking apart. As long as it remains beneath the surface, the pressure of the water keeps everything together.

The true student of Karma Yoga is one who in the midst of great silence and solitude is able to find the Intense Activity of Spiritual Awareness. When they are in the midst of life's struggles, they also have the capacity to find the silence and solitude. These individuals have learned the Secret of Self-Control. They walk about the streets of a big city with all of its noise and traffic, yet their mind is as calm as if they were in a Mountain Sanctuary. Always Intensely Active and Spiritually Aware, they have found that state of mind where nothing negative or disruptive can reach them. THIS IS THE IDEAL OF KARMA YOGA. Once you have achieved that kind of self-control, you will have learned the Real Secret behind Spiritual Work and Action. From that point on, you will be able to Willfully Direct all of the Divine Energies, all of the Power of the Universe, toward a

Greater Good-undisturbed and unaffected by the worldly influences around you.

EXERCISE NUMBER 40

We begin by trying to control and direct all of our daily activities toward an UNSELFISH GOAL. Because we are Co-Creators with the Divine, we must constantly work and act. We must enhance our Awareness of the Divine Power that motivates us in doing all of our actions. As you begin to direct all of your attention to what you are doing and how you are doing it, you will discover that many of your motives are limited and selfish. But do not be discouraged. Gradually, the selfishness will melt away by persistence, until at last you will be able to do nearly every work and act unselfishly. By persistent effort, the day will come when you will become PERFECTLY UNSELFISH. When this happens, all of your Divine Powers will be CONCENTRATED and all of the knowledge, which is yours, will be manifested for the benefit of all Mankind.

Every action that you are able to do unselfishly, will lead to a Greater Awareness of the Divine Wonder of Creation. It opens new doors for you to enter, where you will be ushered into the very Essence of God. As you perform your tasks here in this world, look up at the sky, look down at the earth, look around at your brothers and sisters, and wonder about this Perfect Universal Kingdom in which we live and why we are here. Soon, you will discover that this truly is the Kingdom of God. Soon, you will discover that the Human Possibility is the Greatest Wonder of it All.

May the Peace of God Surround You and Guide You.

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