

**Swami Vivekananda And His Karma-Yoga : An Analysis****Mohit Kumar**R.S.M. (P.G.) College,  
Dhampur (Bijnor) U.P.**Abstract**

Swami Vivekananda is the world teacher who first brought the teaching of Vedanta to the western hemisphere. Vedanta was the message he delivered at the parliament of religions in Chicago in 1893.

The way to the liberation of the soul through self knowledge is called Yoga. Vedanta speaks of four yogas or paths to the goal. Jnana yoga, or the direct way of knowledge; Bhakti yoga or the natural way of divine love; Karma yoga or the practical way of selfless action; and raja yoga or the scientific way of concentration and meditation.

Swami Vivekananda admired a life of action and not that of indolence. After studying *The Gita* he imparted the message to the people that one must work regularly and yet remain detached with its result. Almost all the people have to relate cause with effect so as to realize the importance of duty in life. If one works only for pleasure, it means that one has failed to understand the theory of karma.

**Keywords:** Deliverance, consciousness, self illumination, ethics and intellectual development.

Karma yoga is purifying the mind by means of work. Now if any work is done, good or bad, it must produce as result a good or bad effect; no power can stay it, once the cause is present. Therefore, good action produces good karma and bad action bad karma. They will go in eternal bondage without ever hooping for deliverance. Now karma belongs only to the body or the mind, never to the atman (self) : only it can cast a veil before the atman. The veil cast by bad karma is ignorance. Good karma has the power to strengthen the moral powers. And thus it creates non-attachment; it destroys the tendency towards bad karma and thereby purifies the mind. But if the work is done with the intention of enjoyment, it then produces only that very enjoyment and does not purify the mind or chitta. Therefore all work should be done without any desire to enjoy here or hereafter by the karma yogi. Moreover, this karma

without desire of return will destroy the selfishness, which is the root of the all bondage. The watchword of the karma yogi is "not I, but thou", and no amount of self-sacrifice is too much for him. But he does this without and desire to go to heaven, or gain name or fame of any other benefit in this world.

Now what is the meaning of working without motive? Nowadays many people understand it in the sense that one is to work in such a way that neither pleasure nor pain touches his mind. If this be it's real meaning then animals devour their own offspring's and they do not feel any pangs at all in doing so. Robbers run other people by robbing them of their possessions, but if they feel pleasure or pain, then they also would be working without motive. If its meaning be such then one has stony heart, the worst of criminals might be considered to be working without motive. If such be significance of working without a motive, then a fearful doctrine has been put forth by the preaching of the *Geeta*. Certainly this is not the meaning. Furthermore if we look into the lives of those who were connected with the preaching of the *Geeta*, we should find them living. Arjuna killed Bhishma and Drona in battle, but withal, he sacrificed all this interest and desires and his lower self.

*The Geeta* teaches karma yoga. We should work through yoga (concentration). In such concentration in action (Karma yoga), there is consciousness of the lower ego present. The consciousness that I am doing this and that is never present. When one works through yoga, when one works with concentration, losing all consciousness of oneself the work that is done will be infinitely better, and this very one way has been experienced in his own life. We perform many works subconsciously, such as the digestion of food etc, may other consciously and others again by becoming immersed in Samadhi as it were, when there is no consciousness of the smaller ego. If the painter, losing the consciousness of his ego, becomes completely immersed in his painting, he will be able to produce masterpieces. *The Geeta* teaches that all works should be done thus. He who is one with the lord through yoga performs all his works by becoming immersed in concentration and does not seek any personal benefit. Such performance of work brings only good to the world, no evil can come out of it. Those who work thus never do anything for themselves.

The result of every work is mixed with good and evil. There is no good work that has not a touch of evil in it. We should engage in such works as bring the largest amount of good and the smallest measure of evil. Those who work without any consciousness of their lower ego are not affected with evil, for they work for the good of the world. To work with out

motive, to work unattached, brings the highest bliss and freedom. The secret of Karma yoga is taught by the Lord Shri Krishna in *The Geeta*.

Isolation of the soul from all objects, mental and physical, is the goal; when that is attained, the soul will find that it was alone all the time, and it required no one to make it happy. As long as we require someone else to make us happy, we are slaves.

Swami Vivekananda tells his followers that real knowledge comes from within and not from external factors. One must know what one wants in life. It is ignorance that puts veil of darkness. Due to ignorance one fails to realize one's mental and spiritual powers. But there have been scholars who could overcome their ignorance and understand the supreme Reality. Action is the most important factor for this. He puts working and doing things in the category of action :

Every mental and physical blow is given to the soul by which, as it were, fire is struck from it and by which its own power and knowledge are discovered is karma, this word being used in its crudes sense. Thus we are all doing karma all the time.

One must have one's motive in one's mind and then start working for the same. Swamiji admits that different people have selected different aims for themselves. Some scholars write on wisdom, prudence, self realization, self consciousness, self illumination etc. philosophy is their subject. Others writes on dynamics, winds, physical forces, telecommunication, aircrafts as electronics is their field of work. The saints offer prayers to God and meditate for their spiritual growth. Slaves work only for money as they fail to get time for intellectual development. However, prophets like Mahomet, Christ, Buddha, Mahavir etc. got rid of selfishness and followed the path of truth, forgiveness, celibacy, restraint, ethics, love, non-violence and controlled selfishness. It is not surprising if a foolish fellow makes money. Yet he can not be put in the category of Christ and Lincoln. The wise thinkers look beyond their present and work hard for future regeneration. Every event of the past impresses makes them think beyond selfish aims :

The ideal man is he who, in the midst of the greatest silence and solitude, finds the interest activity and in the midst of the intensert activity finds the silence and solitude of the desert. He has learnt the secret of restraint, he has controlled himself. He goes through the streets of a big city with all its traffic and his mind is as calm as if he were in cave, where not a sound could reach him; and he is intensely working all the time. That is the ideal of Karma yoga.

Duty of any kind is not to be slighted. A man who does the lower work is not, for that reason only a lower man than he who does the higher work; a man should not be judged by the nature of his duty, but by the manner in which he does them his powers to do them are indeed the test of a man. A shoemaker who can turn out a strong, nice pair of shoes in the shortest possible time is a better man, according to his profession and his work, than a professor who talks nonsense everyday.

Every day is holy and devotion to duty is the highest form of the worship of God. Every successful man must have behind him somewhere tremendous integrity, tremendous sincerity and that is the cause of his success in life. He may not have been perfectly unselfish yet he was tending towards it. If he had been perfectly unselfish, his would have been as great a success as that of Buddha or of Christ. The degree of unselfishness marks the degree of success everywhere.

However we may try, there can not be any action which is perfectly pure or impurity in the sense of injury or non-injury. We can not breathe or live without injuring others and every morsel of food we eat is taken from another's mouth; our very lives are crowding out some other lives.

All the work one does he subjective, is done for him for his own benefit. God has not fallen into a ditch for you and me to help him out by building a hospital or something of that sort. He allows you to work. He allows you to exercise your muscles in this great gymnasium, not in order to help him but that you may help yourself. Do you think even an ant will die for want of your help? Most arrant blasphemy! The world does not need you at all. The world goes on, you are like a drop in the ocean. A leaf does not move, the wind does not blow without him. Blessed are we that we are given the privilege of working for him not of helping him. Cut out this word – "Help" from your mind. You can not help; it is blasphemy, you are here yourself at his pleasure. Do you mean to say, you help him? You worship. When you give a morsel of food to the dog, you worship the dog as God. God is in that dog. He is all and in all. We are allowed to worship him. That help which tends to make us strong spiritually is the highest, next to it comes intellectual help and after that physical help. Stand in that reverent attitude to the whole universe and then will come perfect non-attachment. This should be your duty. This is the proper attitude of work. This the secret taught by Karma-yoga.

## **References**

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