

*Motto: "In a state of detachment perform what has to be done, no matter what it is, and never wish to assume the fruits of your doings""*



*Karma Yoga* represents one of the four main classic forms of *Yoga*. *Karma Yoga* represents a starting point and is an essential part of the teachings of *Bhagavad Gita*, this serves as sufficient ground for its authenticity.

Like all other forms of *Yoga*, the main and final purpose of *Karma Yoga* is to facilitate and accelerate the spiritual evolution of its persistent practitioner. The main difference from other forms of *Yoga* is that *Karma Yoga* can be practised well from the very beginning, and can be applied all the time, all day long, because it is applicable to all human activities. Compared to *Bhakti Yoga*, the continuous daily practice of *Bhakti Yoga* for example is only available at a very high level of attainment and the practice of *Jñana Yoga* (with its main form *Haōha Yoga*) is restricted to specific periods of the day, for a specific interval of time. These arguments lead to the conclusion that

*Karma Yoga*

is an instantaneous form of Yoga for the daily life.

From the different traditional definitions of *Karma Yoga*, the most current and precise, though not yet complete, is the following: "*Karm*

*a Yoga*

is the

*Yoga*

of deep and thorough fusion with the Divine, through any unselfish action".

*Karma Yoga*

starts from the fact that at any given moment of our daily life, even when we feel forced to act one way or another, we remain free to choose and we bear the whole responsibility of our actions. The use of any spiritual discipline -

*Yoga*

, or any other spiritual path - implies the existence of 'free will', both in directing one's life and in the choice of the method for doing that. The main question to which

*Karma Yoga*

helps us to get an answer is:

**How and why should we choose between two or more courses of action at a given moment?**

Through persistent practice we can find out that

*Karma Yoga*

gives us more freedom, unbelievable as this may seem to the Western people.

Many contemporary sages, like *Sri Ramakrishna* or *Sri Aurobindo*, have shown that *Karma*  
*Yoga* is

very well adapted to modern times and suitable for all human beings, even more so than

*Bhakti Yoga*

, which suits only those with intense religious inclinations (very rare nowadays).

*Karma Yoga*

suits all beings even better than

*Raja Yoga*

, which implies an intellectual effort beyond the possibilities of the common individual.

Compared to

*Jīana Yoga*,

where a strong power of concentration and internalisation is required (currently a very scarce quality),

*Karma Yoga*

is easier to practice because it does not require all these talents. Moreover,

*Karma Yoga*

suits Westerners extremely well, who are always ready to act and more or less sceptical about the value of spiritual practices, that are taking people away from practical life in a materially

oriented society.



I should also emphasise that the practice of *Karma Yoga* does not exclude the simultaneous practice of one or more of the other forms of *Yoga*

, but will amplify their efficiency. This connection with other forms of *Yoga*

is not essential, because even when practised alone

*Karma Yoga*

is sufficient in itself for bringing the highest state of spiritual attainment.

*Karma Yoga*

has also a great advantage that is not found in the other forms of

*Yoga*

. While

*Bhakti Yoga*

,

*Raja Yoga*

,

*Tantra Yoga*

,

*Haöha Yoga*

and even

*Jïana Yoga*

,

when practised incorrectly, without the careful supervision and guidance of a competent *guru*, can bring about serious physical or mental damage.

*Karma Yoga*

presents no dangers for its practitioner, even if its knowledge is based just on written teachings.

Regarding this aspect, we will further on quote several contemporary masters:

*Swami Vivekananda*: "On the *Bhakti Yoga* path there is the big danger that the receptive soul might start to mistake fleeting emotions for spiritual revelations and might interpret ordinary aspirations for the true spiritual aspirations" (*Practical Yoga*)

"With few exceptions can we learn

*Raja Yoga*

without danger, unless directly guided by a genuine spiritual

*guru*

" (

*Foreword to*

*Raja Yoga*

).

*Sri Ramakrishna* : "The *Jñāna yogi* says: 'I am that', but as long as we consider our body as being our immortal Self, this is ill-fated egotism. It will not help us to progress, but will lead us to ruin" ( *Teachings of Ramakrishna*).

*Swami Brahmananda*: after his disciples were already purified by the practice of certain *asanas* and forms of

*prāyama*,

he told them: "Regarding the

*Haōha Yoga*

practices, avoid them if you don't want to support painful consequences.

*Haōha Yoga*

is a very dangerous path when practised in ignorance, without the guidance of a competent

*guru*

" (

*Spiritual disciplines*

).

We add here that the *Karma Yoga* system is almost free of metaphysical or religious concepts and, even in an advanced stage of practice, *Karma Yoga* does not require the help of any physical discipline and of any diet. However it stands to reason that the *Karma yogi* should do his best to stay healthy.