Bring into Your Life the Crutch of Karma Yoga

SPIRITUALITY | SADHGURU JAGGI VASUDEV

In this four-part series, leading up to the International Day of Yoga on June 21, Sadhguru looks at the four dimensions that underline any kind of yoga and addresses the four fundamental aspects of every human being—body, mind, emotion, and energy.

"The only way to experience true wellbeing is to turn inward. This is what yoga means—not up, not out, but in. The only way out is in."

Sadhguru

Yoga does not need karma. Yoga is to go beyond karma. Why karma yoga has been brought in is to bring about balance in a person. Whatever we call as our awareness, our love, our experience or our glimpses of our reality, it has to be sustained. The path of renouncing is a very wonderful path, but it is very slippery. Extremely slippery. It is the easiest and the most difficult. It is not difficult but it is not at all easy, because it is simple—right now, here and now. But that here and now—how to get it? Whatever you do, it is not in your hands. It is never going to be in your hands. But your hands need something right now, you need to hold something. That is why the crutch of karma yoga.

Without the crutch, most people will not be able to walk. There are a few beings who can walk without the crutch from the first moment. They are very rare beings. Everyone else needs the crutch to manage their awareness. Without this, most people are incapable of remaining aware. So karma yoga is brought into your life to properly temper sadhana with the right kind of action. Karma yoga has unfortunately been described as service, but it is not so. It is a way of undoing the impressions that you have gathered. If you can joyfully involve yourself in any activity, that is karma yoga. If you do it with great effort, only karma will come, no yoga will happen.

Generally it is through various activities that you perform that you get entangled and ensnared with life. But if the activity becomes a process of liberation instead of entanglement, it is karma yoga. Whether it is the nature of the activity is not important. When you do something only because it is needed, where it does not mean anything to you—resolving yourself as if that is your life, it transforms you and action becomes liberating.

Karma means action. If action has to become yoga, action should be liberating. If your activity has become a process of binding yourself, it is karma. So how you are performing the activity is what makes the difference. If you are crawling through your work, that is karma. If you are dancing through your work, that is karma yoga.

The writer is a yogi, mystic and visionary, and a prominent spiritual leader. Visit yogayoga.org for yoga practices, specially designed by Sadhguru, in the run up to the International Day of Yoga on June 21. (www.ishafoundation.org)