

100% Karma: Learn the Art of Conscious Karma that Liberates

by

Bibiji Inderjit Kaur Khalsa

OCEAN IN A DROP SERIES

100%
Karma

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S I R S H R E E



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Synopsis

Let Work be Worship-What exactly is Karma?-How can work practically become worship?-What is destiny? Is rebirth a truth or a myth?-How can we be liberated from karmic bondage?-Why do we go through undesirable experiences?-How can we attain 100% fulfillment through our actions?-How can we transcend karma and lead a life of love, joy and peace?This book is like the Ocean in a drop. It presents the essence of Karma through extracts from conversations between seekers of the Truth and Sirshree.These conversation extracts serve as a simple and lucid guide for beginners as well as advanced seekers of the truth of life. Beginners can understand the crux of action, destiny and how to approach life's challenges. Advanced seekers of the ultimate truth of life can draw the deeper import of Karma-yoga and understand the art of conscious action that can pave the way to Self-realization.Replete with modern day examples and analogies, this book explains how work can become effortless effort. It describes how every action can become worship, liberating you from stress and suffering. The answers expound the secret of 100% karma, about how our actions can lead to completeness, lasting peace and fulfillment.ABOUT THE AUTHORSirshree's spiritual quest which began during his childhood, led him on a journey through various schools of thought and meditation practices. The overpowering desire to attain the truth made him relinquish his teaching job. After a long period of contemplation, his spiritual quest culminated in the attainment of the ultimate truth. Sirshree says, "All paths that lead to the truth begin differently, but end in the same way—with understanding. Understanding is the whole thing. Listening to this understanding is enough to attain the truth."This understanding begins with the mantra of acceptance. The mantra of acceptance is: 'Can I accept this?' symbolized by the mudra (gesture) portrayed above. Sirshree espouses that the understanding of truth is beyond personalities. Seekers of truth need to go beyond personality-worship and embrace the formless truth. Hence, instead of using photographs, the symbol of acceptance is used to represent Sirshree.To disseminate the understanding of truth, Sirshree devised Tejgyan—a unique system for wisdom—that helps one to progress from self-help to self-realization. He has delivered more than 2000 discourses and written over 80 books. His books have been translated in more than ten languages and published by leading publishers such as Penguin Books, Hay House Publishers, Jaico Books, Yogi Impressions, etc. Sirshree's retreats have transformed the lives of thousands and his teachings have inspired various social initiatives for raising global consciousness.

Look inside the book

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Introduction
The Ocean in a Drop
Who you assume as 'I' is a drop in the ocean; Who you truly are is the ocean in a drop. The knowledge of the ultimate truth of life is non-conceptual and cannot be expressed in words. It can be known only through direct first-hand experience. However, words can serve as pointers to recognize the Truth. This book is like the Ocean in a drop. It presents the essential wisdom of life, which has been distilled from conversations between seekers and Sirshree. This book is part of the 'Ocean in a Drop' series. It explains the crux of Karma and Karma-yoga, which are an important facet of life and its purpose. It throws light on the missing links in the understanding of Karma. By reading these conversations, you will discover how to integrate the wisdom of Karma into practical living. The book reveals the Soul of Karma—the missing link in the practice of right action. Actions that are imbued with the Soul of Karma lead to completeness and fulfillment; they become 100% Karma. These conversation transcripts help beginners in understanding the crux of action and its result, destiny and how to approach life's challenges. Advanced seekers of the ultimate truth of life can understand the deeper import of Karma-yoga and the art of conscious action through which liberation can be attained. Every answer arises from the quintessence of wisdom. Scattered in these answers are 100 precious drops, which have been annotated for repeated reading. Reading these profound drops of wisdom and contemplating upon them can bring about a paradigm shift in the perspective of life.

1What is Karma?Seeker 1: What is the real meaning of Karma? Is it different from action? Sirshree: Every action is karma – thinking, looking, listening, sitting, standing, walking, running, driving. And every action begets its fruit. Inaction is also karma. If a student studies hard, he receives the fruit of hard work – he passes his exams with good scores. If a student does not study, he receives the fruit of his inaction as well – he may fail the exams. Avoidance of action is also a form of action. Both, action and inaction are karma and beget results. You cannot escape karma. The journey of human life is perpetuated through karma. Understanding the essence of karma and following it up with awakened action is the way to enlightenment. Understanding is the key. When understanding is missing, one's karma can lead one astray. Seeker 1: Very often, I avoid saying something that is the need of the situation. I avoid acting or decision-making to escape responsibility. From what you said, I understand that inaction is also karma. Escaping responsibility is also action. This is a shift of perspective for me. How can I perform awakened karma? How do I know whether my karma is right or wrong? Sirshree: Your question about right karma expects a logical answer for what's right and wrong. The mind is comfortable when it is provided a clear list of do's and don'ts. However, the truth of karma transcends both 'right' and 'wrong', it is beyond both 'doing' and 'non-doing'. The action that is considered appropriate in a given context can turn out to be inappropriate in another context. An act can prove to be benevolent or harmful, also depending on who is performing it. Consider a man, who is inflicting pain on another with a knife. Now, would you consider this action right or wrong? Seeker 1: Obviously it's wrong. Inflicting pain on someone is a crime. Sirshree: Right. As you said, this is the 'obvious' answer. Let's go beyond the obvious and understand the context. What if it is a surgeon, who is using the knife to operate upon a patient? Is that a crime? Seeker 1: Oh...No. In that case, the doctor is helping the patient. Sirshree: What if the surgery was actually unnecessary and the doctor is only amassing wealth through unfair practices? Seeker 1: Then it's inappropriate. In this case, doesn't the intention of the doctor determine whether the karma is right or wrong? Sirshree: Yes... the intention behind the visible action is all-important. This throws light on an important missing link. Mental actions, in the form of thoughts and feelings, are the primary determinant of the quality of karma, than the outward physical action. The intention behind action determines whether the karma is appropriate. What may seem to be a terrible act to your eyes could possibly be backed by the purest intention. On the contrary, what may seem to be the most benevolent and kind act could be a crafted manifestation of a wicked intention. Let's now consider that the doctor is virtuous and genuinely wants to heal the patient. But what if the doctor is performing the operation without adequate diagnosis? What if he is doing the surgery without being adequately informed about the patient's case? Will his karma be appropriate? What do the rest of you think? Seeker 2: I feel that the doctor's act could prove to be inappropriate despite his best intentions. The treatment could be fatal. Knowledge of the case is important for right action. Sirshree: Good. So we've seen that the aptness of karma is dependent on the intention behind the karma and the understanding of the context for karma. Now let's suppose that the benevolent doctor has carefully assessed the patient's case and carried out all

the necessary diagnosis. However, he has had a bad morning on the day of surgery. He has had an argument with his wife and cursed his way through the traffic to the hospital. When he is at the operating table to do the surgery, his mind is clouded with anger and frustration. Does this change the quality of his karma? Seeker 3: I think the quality of his action will depend on his ability to be focused. If the doctor is able to focus on the job at hand by setting aside his feelings, then it shouldn't matter. However, if his feelings get the better of him, it can affect his performance as a surgeon. Sirshree: So the feeling that you bring into your actions also determines the quality of karma. Pure feelings of compassion, oneness and gratitude that arise from an attitude of surrender to the divine will, transform work into worship. The Soul of Karma is embodied by these three aspects – love, understanding and pure feeling. Any act that is imbued with the feeling of love, wisdom, and pure virtuous intention is 100% karma. It arises from higher awareness. Action that arises from an awakened Soul of Karma brings completeness and fulfillment in your life. Action arising from ignorance, lower intentions, devoid of love and compassion is soulless karma. It is reactive as it arises from the past conditioning of the mind. It does not give completeness. Far from being 100%, it entangles you and leads to sorrow or confusion. Seeker 3: Isn't every action actually a reaction to situations? Is it possible to have pure non-reactive action? Sirshree: Not all actions are reactions. Reactions are programmed responses to external or even internal stimuli. The subconscious mind has been designed to automate responses to certain stimuli. Since childhood, we observe and learn certain fixed responses. The subconscious mind is the storehouse of such fixed responses. For example, do you need to think twice before pulling your hand away from fire? Do you actually think, "This fire can burn my hand; let me take my hand away"? No. It happens automatically without conscious thought. The subconscious mind is programmed to enact this response to the stimulus of fire. We've borrowed this behaviour through genes, through our upbringing from parents, our neighbourhood, through school and largely through the media. You suddenly brake the car to a halt when an obstacle appears on the road. You catch hold of anything you can get your hands on to when you stumble. These are automatic reactions. It's actually useful that your actions are automatic in these instances. It saves you the effort of consciously considering repetitive actions. This is indeed a blessing. However, this blessing becomes a curse when it comes to programmed behaviour. For example, how is your response when you feel cornered in a group? Consider the compulsive need to withdraw from a scene where you sense insecurity or hostility. Consider the pleasure that is felt when the scene conforms to your liking. These deeply ingrained responses helplessly manifest, much against your conscious will. Seeker 3: Yes... There are situations when I just can't control my response. I tend to respond impulsively. At times, when people speak harshly or swear, I feel agitated and retort at them. What is the relation between impulsiveness and Karma? Sirshree: When someone speaks harshly or swears at you, perhaps you may be compelled to swear at them in return. When someone praises you, you may feel gratified and comply with their needs. You may say, "The situation was such, so I got angry." This is a reaction, because it is dependent on circumstances. Your behaviour with

people is dependent on how they behave with you. You hand over the remote control of your life to people and situations. Most people lead life in this reactive way, by being a victim of their past conditioning. Reactive living does not need higher awareness. You do not need awareness to follow the same beaten path every day. However, if you have to choose a new path, which is unknown, it needs awareness. Creative living requires higher awareness. Human evolution is all about moving from reactive living to creative living; it is about raising the level of consciousness. When you raise your level of consciousness, you begin to act less and less impulsively or compulsively. Your actions will become increasingly intuitive and creative.

Seeker 2: How can we act creatively in testing circumstances?

Sirshree: An awakened response arises intuitively from pure consciousness. It does not arise from the storehouse of programmed responses. It is fresh and creative. Actions arising from pure consciousness are independent of prior mental conditioning. They are fresh and novel actions, free from past prejudices. They are imbued with the Soul of Karma. Develop the habit of questioning yourself in everyday situations. Ask yourself: "Am I reacting mechanically to this person, to this situation?" When you question yourself in this way, it creates an opportunity to respond creatively. With raised awareness, you become conscious of the space where you can choose your response. When you practice being in the stillness of pure consciousness, your actions will arise from the freedom of choice of response. For example, if someone swears at you, you will choose an awakened response by either ignoring it or responding creatively. An awakened response is not constrained by fixed patterns of behaviour. The Soul of Karma awakens with rise in consciousness. Love, wisdom and pure feelings will drive your actions to attain completeness, making them 100% Karma. Whenever you feel the need to act impulsively, take a pause and dip into the stillness beyond thoughts. This enables you to raise your awareness and take inspired action.

2From Doing to Being

Seeker 1: We all are born, grow up, fulfill our responsibilities, have families and then pass away... What is the purpose of all this? What is the purpose of human life?

Sirshree: The purpose of life is 'life' itself. When people are not prepared to receive higher answers, they are told, "The goal of life is to become a doctor, or an engineer, or just to be successful. If you want to become a carpenter, then become a good carpenter. If you aspire to become a doctor, become a good doctor." Initially, such replies seem adequate. However, it is only when one is prepared to receive higher understanding that they get higher answers: The goal of human life is that 'life should know life'. Life, in this context, refers to the inner experience of aliveness within each one of us, which has been known as Self, God, Christ, Ishwar, Allah, Lord, and so on. It is the living consciousness within us due to which the body is alive and moving. In the absence of the enlivening consciousness, the body would be a mere corpse. The body moves only because of the presence of the Self, the conscious presence. Let life return unto itself; let life experience its own essence. When the life principle in a body is consciously aware of itself, it is called Self-realization. The purpose of life is to realize the Self and to be established in the Self. Self here refers to God or Consciousness, the Source of everything, the

very essence of life itself. 'The goal of life is life itself' means that the purpose of human life is to attain Self-realization and to be stabilized in that experience. The underlying meaning behind this answer is that you should know yourself, your original nature. It is only in order to realize who-you-truly-are and express its divine qualities that you have been associated with your body. When you know the real meaning of life, you will also understand the art of 'being life'. Many people wish to learn the art of living. But you don't have to learn the art of living; you need to learn the art of being life itself. This means that you have to shift your focus from the objects of perception to that which enables perception, from thought to that which enables thinking. You will then rise above the changing and limited to that which is changeless, eternal and boundless. Up until now, you have lived your life assuming yourself to be a body. You identified yourself with your body and often said, "This person appreciated me; she made fun of me..." However, all this happened not with you, but with your body (the body-mind mechanism). When you raise your level of consciousness to its pinnacle, you experience the inherent oneness of all beings and everything in the universe. The goal of life is to attain the experience of that oneness and be established in it. When you are unaware of this whole-and-sole life purpose, you don't work at it. But when you gain clarity, you won't miss a single opportunity that helps you to progress further toward Self-realization.

Seeker 1: What exactly is Self-realization? Is it the ultimate goal of life? Isn't there anything beyond?

Sirshree: Self-realization is the realization of our oneness with Consciousness through experience of our true nature. We live by assuming ourselves to be our body and mind. When we experience our true nature as pure consciousness, beyond the body and mind, it is called Self-realization. We live with the belief, "I am the body". When we clearly know the fallacy of this belief, the underlying oneness of everything is experientially revealed. The limited individual personality, that appears due to identification with the body, dissolves. The universal 'I', the real 'I' is realized. Whatever we pursue in our worldly life is only the foreground. Self-realization is the background of all pursuits. It is the aim behind all aims of life, because it is the art of 'being' life itself. It is the fulfillment of the very purpose of human life. Is there anything beyond Self-realization? It can be said that Self-realization is just the beginning. Self-stabilization is the ultimate goal.

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