

The Secret of Work by Swami Vivekanand

B.A. Part II
Subsidiary

Swami Vivekanand, the disciple of Ram Krishna Paramhans is a great Indian philosopher and thinker. 'The Secret of Work' has been taken from his 'Karmayoga' which explains the ideal of non-attachment to work.

The author is of the view that the miseries of the world cannot be cured by physical help. The change in man's nature is quite necessary to end the miseries. Ignorance is the root cause of all sufferings and evils. Only right knowledge, spiritual progress and purity end the miseries of the world.

In the Bhagwad Gita we have been asked time and again to work incessantly. Every action is a mixture of good and evil. Good action leaves good effects and bad action, bad. But both create a bondage for the soul. The solution the Gita provides is that we should work without being attached to it.

Vivekanand says that every work that we do and every thought that we think leave impressions on our minds. These impressions are called Samskara. The character of a man is determined by the sum total of these impressions. If good impression prevails the character becomes good and if bad impressions prevail, the character

becomes bad. A man is like a machine in the hands of his impressions. A man of good character has control over his indriyas or sense organs. Nobody can persuade or force him to do bad acts. Such a man is safe, even in bad company.

There is a still higher state than having this good tendency. That is the desire for liberation. Liberation is the freedom of soul. It is the freedom from the bondage of both good and bad. So work should not produce an impression on the mind. Thus the 'attached' becomes 'unattached'.

Vishvanand advises to work like a 'stranger' and 'sojourner'. He says, "This world is not our habitation, it is only one of the many stages through which we are ^{passing} ~~crossing~~." He advises to work like a master and not like a slave. Selfish work is slave's work. Work should be inspired by love. Every act of love brings happiness. Lord Krishna says that he always works, though he gains nothing from it. Yet he works because he loves the world. Real love makes us unattached.

The ultimate goal of life is to achieve unattachment. God is unattached because he never expects anything in return. If we work and do not expect anything in return, our action will bring no attachment. Attachment comes only when we hope for returns of our actions. We should look upon work as worship. We should work and leave the results unto the lord. Thus we achieve unattachment through selfless work. This unattachment gives us real peace and happiness.

In this way it can be said that the secret of work lies in unattachment. The essay is thought-provoking. The style is marked with force, precision and clarity. It has wonderful depth and philosophy.