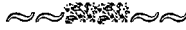


The Lord, has bestowed this human body, so that human beings may attain salvation, by purifying their nature. They can purify their nature, it is neither impossible nor difficult. This human body, has been called the gateway to salvation (Mānasa 7/43/4). Had it been impossible, to purify nature, how could this human body have been called, the gateway to salvation? There is no use of this human life, if a man cannot purify his nature.

Appendix—By performing one's own duty there can be sin but the striver cannot incur this sin—'kurvannāpnoti kilbiṣam'. In incurring sin the main cause is the 'feeling' rather than an 'action'. Therefore sin is incurred, not by actions but by selfishness and pride.



सहजं कर्म कौन्तेय सदोषमपि न त्यजेत् ।

सर्वारम्भा हि दोषेण धूमेनाग्निरिवावृताः ॥ ४८ ॥

sahajaṁ karma kaunteya sadoṣamapi na tyajet
sarvārambhā hi doṣeṇa dhūmenāgnirivāvṛtāḥ

One should not abandon, O Arjuna, one's innate duty, even though it may have flaws, for all undertakings are clouded by defects, as fire is by smoke. 48

Comment:—

[In the preceding verse, the Lord declared, "He who performs his duty ordained by his own nature, incurs no sin." It means that duty ordained by one's own nature, also involves sin. Therefore, the Lord declares, "The natural duties, even though defective, should not be abandoned, because all of these are clouded by defects, as fire by smoke."]

'Sahajaṁ karma kaunteya sadoṣamapi na tyajet'—The duties ordained by one's own nature, are called innate duties. A Brāhmaṇa's innate duties, are serenity and self-control etc., a Kṣatriya's heroism and vigour etc., a Vaiśya's agriculture and cattle-rearing etc., and a Śūdra's, service.

Duties ordained by one's own nature, have the following defects:—

(1) God and the soul, His fragment, both are one's own (Sva), while Prakṛti (Matter) and its evolutes, body etc., are different (Para). But the self, a fragment of God, being overpowered by Prakṛti, becomes a slave to it. In other words, all activities are taking place in nature. But, the self by assuming affinity with Nature holds, that they are taking place in him. Thus, he becomes a slave to it. To be such a slave, is a great mistake.

(2) Every action involves violence, in one way or the other.

(3) Action which is desirable to one, is undesirable to someone else. This undesirability, is a defect.

(4) An action may not be performed well, because of heedlessness or error.

A person, should not abandon his innate duty, even though it may be defective. For example, a Kṣatriya's or a Vaiśya's actions, are not to be as virtuous and polite, as those of a Brāhmaṇa. But the Kṣatriyas or the Vaiśyas are not held responsible for those defects and for violence, which their activities involve. They derive benefit by performing these, because these are sanctioned by scriptures and are easily performed, as they suit their temperament.

Alms, is the means of a Brāhmaṇa's livelihood. It may seem free from any defect but it is not. Suppose a beggar is standing at the door of a householder, and another comes there. He is a burden on the householder. There can be jealousy between the two beggars. If food materials are not ready, the householder feels sorry. Suppose, a householder does not want to offer anything, so he suffers pain, after seeing the beggar. If he offers something, he has to incur expenses. But, if the beggar or Brāhmaṇa, returns empty-handed, the householder incurs sin. So he gets entangled, in a dilemma. Thus, though alms involve a blot, yet a Brāhmaṇa, should not abandon it.

A Kṣatriya, has to kill warriors of the army of an enemy.

But he incurs no sin, because it is his innate duty, which is prescribed by scriptures. Similarly, in agriculture, the duty of a Vaiśya involves, violence of several insects and germs. But a Vaiśya, incurs no sin, as it is his innate duty, which is sanctioned by scriptures. So innate duties, should not be abandoned.

Though men, by performing innate duties, incur no sin, how will those duties, lead to salvation? In fact, these are evil propensities, such as desire, attachment, selfishness and pride, which bind a man and because of which, a man incurs sin. So if he performs duties for God's sake, by abandoning evil propensities, without expecting any reward, he will not be bound.

'Sarvārambhā hi doṣeṇa dhūmenāgnirivāvṛtāḥ'—As, there is smoke at the beginning, when fire is burnt, similarly, all undertakings are enveloped by defects, as their performance depends on incidents, circumstances and occasions etc., and these may be undesirable for others. So, a man who performs these duties without expecting any reward, incurs no sin. Therefore, the Lord is saying to Arjuna, "Brother! It is thy duty, to wage war, which you regard as dreadful, for there is nothing more welcome, for a man of the warrior class, than a righteous war" (Gītā 2/31).

Appendix—Because of the attachment to forbidden actions or because of the enjoyment of pleasure against the ordinance of the scripture, performance of actions, sanctioned by the scriptures, seems difficult. In fact actions sanctioned by the scriptures are innate and natural, they need no labour. From the forty-first verse upto this verse the terms 'svakarma', 'svadharma' and 'sahaja karma' have been used. It proves that the Gītā regards 'svakarma' (one's own duty), 'sahaja karma' (innate duty) as 'svadharma' (one's own duty).

Actions which are sanctioned by the scriptures, are certainly tainted with blemish; but if a striver has no desire, he does not hanker after pleasures, then he is not tainted with blemish. It means that whether the doer is tainted with blemish or not, depends on his intention; as—if a surgeon has good intention, wants to serve

the patient rather than to earn money, while performing a surgical operation, he cuts the part of the patient's body, yet he is not tainted with blemish, but his act is regarded as virtuous because he performs the operation selflessly for the good of the patient.



Link:—Now, the Lord while introducing the topic of Sāṅkhyayoga, describes a man who is qualified to practise, Sāṅkhyayoga.

असक्तबुद्धिः सर्वत्र जितात्मा विगतस्पृहः ।

नैष्कर्म्यसिद्धिं परमां सन्यासेनाधिगच्छति ॥ ४९ ॥

**asaktabuddhiḥ sarvatra jītātmā vigataspr̥haḥ
naiṣkarmyasiddhiṁ paramāṁ sannyāsenādhigacchati**

He, whose intellect is unattached alround, who has subdued his body, and from whom desire has fled—he, attains the supreme state of non-action, through Sāṅkhyayoga, (the Discipline of Knowledge). 49

Comment:—

Sannyāsa (Sāṅkhyayoga), is the means to attain, the supreme state. Now, the Lord describes the three factors in the first half of the verse which enable a man to practise Sāṅkhyayoga (the Discipline of Knowledge).

(1) 'Asaktabuddhiḥ sarvatra'—His intellect remains unattached, to incidents, circumstances, things, actions and persons etc.

(2) 'Jītātmā'—He has conquered his body i.e., he is not overpowered by heedlessness and indolence etc., rather he overpowers these. He performs prescribed duties promptly, and abstains from forbidden actions.

(3) 'Vigataspr̥haḥ'—He has no subtle desire, even to get the bare necessities of life, such as water, food, clothes and shelter. He is satisfied with, whatsoever, he gets.

It means that a striver, who wants to follow the Discipline of Knowledge (Sāṅkhyayoga), has to renounce his attachment