

It has been said that, as in the case of a worm born in poison, a person does not incur sin while performing his duties which have been dictated by his own nature; and that someone else's duty is fraught with fear; also that, one who does not have the knowledge of the Self, (he) surely cannot remain even for a moment without doing work (cf. 3.5). Hence—

सहजं कर्म कौन्तेय सदोषमपि न त्यजेत् ।
सर्वारम्भा हि दोषेण धूमेनाग्निरिवावृताः ॥४८॥

48. O son of Kuntī, one should not give up the duty to which one is born, even though it be faulty. For all undertakings are surrounded with evil, as fire is with smoke.

Kaunteya, O son of Kuntī; *na tyajet*, one should not give up;—what?—the *karma*, duty; *sahajam*, to which one is born, which devolves from the very birth; *api*, even though; it be *sadosam*, faulty, consisting as it is of the three *gunas*. *Hi*, for; *sarva-ārambhāh*, all undertakings (—whatever are begun are *ārambhāh*, that is ‘all actions’, according to the context—), being constituted by the three *gunas* (—here, the fact of being constituted by the three *gunas* is the cause—); are *āvrtāh*, surrounded; *dosena*, with evil; *iva*, as; *agnih*, fire; is *dhūmena*, with smoke, which comes into being concurrently.

One does not get freed from evil by giving up the duty to which one is born—called one's own duty—, even though (he may be) fulfilling somebody else's duty. Another's duty, too, is fraught with fear. The meaning is: Since action cannot be totally given up by an unenlightened person, therefore he should not relinquish it.

Opponent: Well, is it that one should not abandon action because it cannot be given up completely, or is it because evil (230) follows from the giving up of the duty to which one is born?

Counter-objection: What follows from this?

Opponent: If it be that the duty to which one is born should not be renounced because it is impossible to relinquish it totally, then the