

**KARAMANYAVADHIKARASTHE MAA PHALESHU KADACHANA  
MAA KARMA PHALA HETUR BHURMA TE SANAGOSTVAKARMANI**

**You have the right to work only  
but never to its fruits.  
Let not the fruits of action be your motive.  
Nor let your attachment be to inaction.**

This sloka has to be divided into four quarters to understand it fully and is one of the most important as it summarises the entire philosophy of "karma." It demands that the seeker develops the knowledge of "right action." Jnana and Karma have to mingle and together they take the seeker to higher planes of spiritual enlightenment.

- a) Karmanye vadhikaraste: you have a right to work only
- b) Maa phaleshu kadachana: no right for the fruits thereof.
- c) Maa karma phla-heturbhuh: let not the fruits be your motive.
- d) Maa te sangostv akarmani: let not be attached to inaction.

"**Adhikara**" is the most important word in this sloka and we must understand it clearly. It means "right", "entitlement."

The student who has gained entry into a school, paid the fees is entitled to enter the school and attend the prescribed classes. He has "adhikara" to be in the school during the classes.

The consultant at a particular hospital, selected by the panel, gets the right to enter the premises and work in the appropriate ward.

The M.P having won the confidence of the electorate has a right to enter the House of Parliament. He has the "adhikara" to do so.

On this basis, due to our past karmas, the Lord has given us the "Adhikara" to live as "humans" on this earth.

Each one of us, by His blessings, as a result of actions performed both in the past births and in this life, have attained a certain position in family/society we live in.

Like a director of a film/play, we have been given different roles to play.

"You have a right to work only" and "no rights for the fruits thereof" has to be understood in this context. We have to work according to the rules of the position we are given. Our sastras call it as "Ashrama dharma". A child has to follow the rules of childhood and the student has to follow the rules of education. We have a duty to fulfil that role.

What we get from our work, as we will understand when we proceed to the other chapters is to share with family/society.

Life starts from being in debt from childhood itself.

We are in debt to our parents for the love and affection they put in our upbringing and for the sacrifices they undergo.

To the society who provide the basic needs like education, medical care, water supply, electricity etc during the period of education from kindergarten to university. (Our parents fee towards the education is a paltry sum in relation to the contribution by the society.)

When we understand this way, we realise that the pay packet we receive should include repayment to the society for the debts incurred. If we work out how much it costs the society to give full education to a child, the young adult from the time of graduation has to work without pay for the rest of his/her life.

So, what we really get from our work as pay/fee cannot be called as "my money".

The second quarter of the sloka "no rights for the fruits thereof" has to be understood on this basis.

The word "**adhikara**" can be understood as "right of inheritance" also. Unless we are entitled to, we cannot inherit any property from our ancestors.

From our parents, we have inherited the "Divine Soul" with a physical body to conduct the actions as servants of the "Divine."

Both the Soul and the physical body are precious inheritance and we must look after them carefully. After being born as "humans," we have a duty to work "humanely."

The result, the Lord says will come on their own accord. But they do depend upon how we conduct the duties. We must know the "job description" of any job we are selected for and work accordingly. Breaking the job description as we know results in expulsion from that job.

As we proceed further and understand the sacred text clearly, we will learn that the results of our actions have to be shared with family/friends/society and not just for personal gains and personal pleasures.

We do get wealth in one form or other from our actions. Students gets the wealth of education, (jnana) and the employees gets pay packet for their actions. We have to consider that the wealth we get from our actions and what we hold on to is only as "caretakers" of that wealth and not as the sole owners. The bank manager with responsibility of large sums of money works only as its caretaker. Using it for personal gains and pleasures is equal to having committed a crime and face the consequences of the same.

"Let not the fruits of action be your motive":

We have to read it as "Nishkama karma". There should be no desire for the results of the actions.

Of course it is a fact that each job has its set standard of pay/benefits. Having graduated and appointed as a teacher, the job comes with a pay packet at the end of each month. The pay packet should not be the motive for the job is what we must understand. Working with the thought on the reward at the end of the work automatically reduces the work efficiency. Single pointed concentration on day to day's work will bring in the maximum result in any job undertaken.

The society we are in now has deteriorated so fast that we have started to live not with the money earned yesterday but using the money we hope to get tomorrow. It is the era of "plastic cards, credit cards." We enter into the trap of "Debt" by borrowing the tomorrow's money for today.

"I am going to be the "Prime Minister" and I am going to enjoy the benefits of the office " should not be the attitude to work. On the other hand, it should be: "I am going to be the servant of the public and work for the welfare of the society."

Each days work has to be given its importance and the work fulfilled to one's maximum potential. The pay packet will come on its own accord at the end of the month. Working with the monetary benefit in mind will dilute the efficiency of the work. If the work is not satisfactory, there is a possibility of loosing the job also.

Single pointed dedicated work becomes "Divine work." This is "dhyana" in its true sense.

"Nor let your attachment be to inaction":

There may be some, who by not understanding the sloka properly come to think that actions lead automatically to attachment. No one can live without work even for a second. To give up work is a sign of laziness and it becomes "Tamasic." The parents have parental duty towards their children and cannot escape from the same.

Spiritual seeker must know that he has to burn the existing vasanas. By not burning the inherited vasanas, he will not make any progress.

Arjuna wanted to escape from the war, go to the forest, become a sanyasi. He did not want to face the terrible consequences of war. Sri Krishna is categorically warning him not to do so.

For a short while Arjuna might find peace in the forest but soon would get involved in the life of forest and his kshatriya tendencies will manifest again.

### to be continued week after next, following a short break for the festive season ###