

Sloka 4 (Chapter 3)

**NA KARMANAM ANARAMBHAM NAISHKARMYAM PURUSHO'SNUTE
NA CHA SANYASAD EVA SIDDHIM SAMADHIGACHATI**

**Man does not reach the actionless state of Brahman by non-performance of actions.
Man also does not attain “perfection” by renunciation only.**

Let us analyse the first half of the verse:

"Man does not reach the actionless state of Parabrahman by non-performance of actions."

Many have a wrong notion that as sin can only result from the actions performed, it is best to avoid actions altogether.

They also have a wrong notion that “Brahman is actionless.”

If I achieve “Liberation” I do not need to conduct any more actions, they assume.

We are told that all these assumptions are wrong. Why?

Each one of us is on this earth commissioned to live through and exhaust the fruits of our actions conducted in the past and continuing to conduct at present. To exhaust all the stored vasanas (vasana kshaya) and achieve the destruction of the so called mind of ours, (Manonasha) we have no choice but to work. Only on achieving the two conditions successfully, i.e.: “vasana kashaya and mano nasha,” we can realise the state of “Parabrahman”.

Even then, to consider that “Parabrahman is actionless” is also a wrong notion.

Parabrahman is constantly at work for the maintenance of the universe He created.

The second half of the verse:

“Man also does not attain perfection by renunciation.”

A child gets perfection in walking after several attempts to crawl, to stand up and start learning to walk the first few steps.

One attains perfection in cookery after the first few failed attempts.

We have to live in this world, conduct ordained actions and learn from our mistakes.

Later on we will come to know this as “Jnana and Vijnana”. Knowledge by itself cannot make the individual perfect. Actions conducted with the knowledge, learning from the mistakes are necessary to attain perfection. We will be told later on in chapter 7 that one in a million tries to achieve perfection and a rare few among those who try will actually succeed in achieving perfection.

Graduation does not give the title of “Professor and Head of the Department.” The graduate has to pass through a number of stages of promotion from lecturer to Professor.

Thinking that we know all about “actions and results, both good and bad; happiness, sorrow” and decide to renounce all actions is a foolish assumption.

In continuation of the theme taken up in the previous verse, Sri Krishna is therefore stressing on the need to conduct actions.

In spiritual evolution we have to climb from being:

Stone man
To
Animal man
To
Man man
To
God man.

The final aim is to achieve “Liberation.”

The higher we climb the spiritual ladder, more responsibility is on us to conduct actions for the welfare of the universe.

Let us remember the verse 47, chapter 2:

Karmanyē vādīkārasthe--.

Clearing the thought imprints needs conducting actions in the spirit of “offering the results of good actions to the Lord” and conducting actions “without any motive for selfish gains.”

Na karmanaam arambha:

This is the first quarter of the verse.

“Arambha” is beginning.

“Na karmanaam” means “not conducting actions.”

There is always a beginning and end to any work conducted.

There is no such thing as “not conducting actions.” The thought imprints on our mind which we carry as a result of past actions is the beginning for all actions. Sooner or later we have to work to burn all the stored vasanas.

Our philosophy tells us that we have all come from “Parabrahman” and we have to finally go back to Him.

The first day we came out into this world, not of this birth, but of the first ever birth into this world (of which we have no notion at all), we started to conduct actions. As we accumulate more and more vasanas due to desires and hatreds in the births we undertake, we have to:

- Purify our minds of all past thoughts
- To obtain jnana and finally
- To attain Moksha.

Actions performed with this principle are true karma. Such actions then become “Yajna.” Yajna is “dedicated action.”

The Vedas prescribe various duties to perform by the members of any one given community to suit the temperament of the individuals. We are part of the community we live in. We have to live in harmony with others. To keep the communities together each member of that community has to take up some form of work. No one in the community has a right not to work.

By asserting that “by not working one does not get Liberated”, Sri Krishna is giving us the motivation to work for the community.