

śraddhā-bhakti-dhyāna-yogād avaihi

Sixth part of the serial article continued from July 2019 issue. Bhakti topic continues..

The law of *karma* is not ordinary. Once you start this spiritual journey, everything else has to just stand and watch. In fact, the power of all other *karmas* gets weakened. Their clamour becomes less. They all have power if you do not have this pursuit. If you have this pursuit, they have no power. You are taken forward. That is the assurance.

Therefore, even if you have *śraddhā* you require the *anugraha* of the Lord. How do you earn *īśvara-anugraha*? It is only by *karma*. *Karma* is of two types. One is *iṣṭa*, Vedic rituals, and the other is *pūrta*, *sevā* activities. There is no third type¹. These are the only two means of earning *anugraha*. And for this you need to perform *nitya-naimittika-karmas*, your daily and occasional *pūjās*, *japa* and so on.

Everyone has *antaḥ-karaṇa-aśuddhi* in the form of *duritas* and *rāga-dveṣas*, likes and dislikes. One has to neutralise some of these *duritas* and *rāga-dveṣas* also. One should not come under their spell. For this, one must have *Īśvara* in one's life.

The *vaidika-karmas* were there in all times, in all *yugas*. But in *kali-yuga* the *vaidika-karmas* are not often pursued. People do not follow the enjoined *karmas*. Who performs *karmas* like *agnihotra* these days? Even if a person does *agnihotra karma*, he does so because no one else does it, and therefore, he will get all the attention, all the honours. He does *agnihotra-karma* just to be able to say, "I am an *agnihotrin*." He does not do it for *antaḥ-karaṇa-śuddhi*, which is why this is *kali-yuga*. Then, what else does one do for *antaḥ-karaṇa-śuddhi*? What is the redress for the people in *kali-yuga*? What is the way out? *Hari-nāma*, taking to the Lord's name, is the only refuge². *Hari-nāma* is *upalakṣaṇa* for all actions done with *bhakti*. It will, therefore, include *pūjā*, *arcana*, *pārāyaṇa* of *viṣṇu-sahasranāma* and so on.

We divide *karmas* in a three-fold way on the basis of *karaṇas*, the means of accomplishing them. That which accomplishes an action is called *karaṇa*³. There are many divisions. This is one basis of division: *kāyika*, physical; *vācika*, oral and *mānasa*, mental. We will see *mānasa-karma* under *dhyāna*.

¹ *Datta*' a third type of *karma* mentioned in the *śāstra* can be included in *iṣṭa* or *pūrta karma*

² Kalau kalmaṣa-cittānaṁ pāpa-dravyopa-jīvināṁ vidhi-kriyāvihīnānāṁ harer nāmaiva kevalam

³ Kriyate anena iti karaṇam.

The *kāyika* and *vācika* *karmas* come under *iṣṭa-karma*. All these *karmas* are *karṭṛ-tantra*, will-based. You choose a *karma*. When you choose *kāyika-karma*, it includes all types of *pūjās*. In this, all three *karaṇas*—body, speech and mind—are employed. Limbs like hands are involved. You are repeating the names of Bhagavān and you are repeating various chants. In performing a *pūjā*, therefore, the body is involved, speech is involved, the mind is involved, an altar of worship is involved, and varieties of materials such as incense, flowers, water and so on are involved. This ritual can be regularly done.

Kāyika does not mean that the whole body is involved. Here we have to note one thing. The limbs, like hands, and *vāk*, the organ of speech, are both *karmendriyas*, organs of action. If *vāk* is a *karmendriya*, actions done by *vāk* will naturally come under *kāyika-karma*. Then why has it been mentioned separately as *vācika-karma*? Because *vācika-karma* is subtler than *kāyika*. When you do *kāyikakarma*, all the three *karaṇas* are employed. Since all the *karaṇas* are employed, the result that a *kāyika-karma* can produce is greater than that of a *vācika-karma*.

There are two types of *phala*, result, for a *karma*—*drṣṭa*, seen and *adrṣṭa*, unseen. *Puṇya-pāpa* are *adrṣṭa*. The *adrṣṭaphala* for *kāyika-karma* is definitely greater because all the three *karaṇas* are employed. This *karma* can become more and more elaborate. For instance, when fire is involved, priests are involved and *dakṣiṇā* is involved, one incurs a lot of expenditure and puts forth a lot of effort. That means it certainly has more results.

These three types of *karmas*—*kāyika*, *vācika* and *mānasa*—are prayers which have a result. All prayers are valid. Whether one prays in Hebrew, Sanskrit or in Tamil, a prayer is a prayer. Bhagavān is not going to be confused. I do not say all prayers are one and the same. I never say that.

I also never say that all religions lead to the same goal. All religions cannot lead to the same goal because our goal is right here. Others think that their religious goal is after death. If they lead a faithful life with prayers, probably they have a chance in the afterlife. There is no such guarantee. For us the goal is right here. We have special prayers for special results. Any prayer has its own result and we accept that. But other religions do not even accept that. For them an altar of worship is not acceptable.

Once, there was a big discussion in Delhi. An important leader from the Hindu religion was there, and a leader from another religion was also present. The Hindu leader said, “We accept all religions.” The other person said, “That is your problem. You do not have a religion, and that is why you accept all religions. We have the right religion, which is why we do not accept all other religions which are false.” The discussion ends. There is no discussion here. They do not accept what you say. It is not true that all religions lead to the same goal.

For instance, you pray to Lord Dhanvantari for removal of diseases. When you undergo a treatment, you do not know what all happens. For the modern allopathic medicines, the contraindications are written. It may say that there is a one percent chance of developing a brain tumour, but otherwise the medicine is wonderful. So when you read all this, you better say a prayer. One in a billion wins the lottery. Even for that you have to pray. Here you pray to Goddess Lakṣmī. You have to have *daiva* (grace) with you. In any undertaking, you have to take prayer into account to control the hidden variables. Therefore, our Vedic tradition has varieties of prayers and not simply broad-spectrum prayers.

...to be continued

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Editor.