

॥सनत्सुजातीयम्॥

## sanatsujAtIyam

(Translated by S.N.Sastri)

(Based on the bhAshya of SrI Sankara bhagavatpAda)

### Chapter 1

sanatsujAtIyam is one of the three gems in the mahAbhArata on which SrI Sankara has given commentaries, the other two being the bhagavadgItA and vishNu sahasranAma. This forms chapters 41 to 46 of udyogaparva. It consists of four chapters with a total of 146 verses. (samskRt names and words have been transliterated using ITrans).

The jIva (the individual), though he is in his true nature identical with the non-dual brahman which is Consciousness-Existence-Bliss, has fallen from his natural state because of avidyA (nescience) which causes him to identify himself with the non-Self in the form of the body, mind, and senses. As a result he has become subject to all miseries. He strives to attain what is pleasant and to avoid what is unpleasant through the performance of various actions. Failing to attain the highest goal of life, namely, liberation, even after performing various acts, both secular and religious, dragged about here and there by attachment, aversion, etc, as if by a crocodile, the jIva takes birth in various wombs as god, man, animal, and so on and, overcome by delusion, continues in the cycle of birth and death. Then, because of some merit (puNya) acquired, he becomes free from attachment and other defects by the performance of all actions as an offering to God, develops detachment towards all pleasures both in this world and in other (higher) worlds, and desires to realize his identity with brahman as laid down in vedAnta. He cultivates the means to liberation such as control of the mind, control of the senses, etc, and approaches an AcArya who has realized brahman. By the study of vedAnta in accordance with the instructions of the AcArya he attains the realization of the truth about brahman and the jIva in the form 'I am brahman' and, becoming free from ignorance and its effects, he remains as brahman. bhagavAn sanatsujAta expounds all this gradually to dhRtarAshTra in this work.

dhRtarAshTra, tormented by grief and delusion, and realizing, on hearing the vedAntic statement that the knower of brahman becomes free from sorrow, that eradication of sorrow is impossible without brahmavidyA, asks vidura, "You have told me most wonderful things. If there is any thing not yet said by you, please tell me that, since I am eager to hear". vidura, though learned in the scriptures, very compassionate, and omniscient, knowing brahmavidyA to be the province of persons competent to impart it, does not consider himself competent to do it because of his birth from the womb of a SUdra woman. Pondering over the means by which he could establish

dhRtarAshTra in the supreme brahman which is bliss itself, he remembers the famous story in the chAndogya upanishad and decides that none other than bhagavAn sanatsujAta would be able to lead him to the infinite supreme Self beyond the darkness of ignorance. He therefore invokes bhagavAn sanatsujAta by his yogic power, and after worshipping him with prostrations, tells him, "O bhagavAn, there is some doubt in dhRtarAshTra's mind, which cannot be cleared by me. I therefore request you to answer his doubt, on hearing which this king will go beyond all sorrow, and will be able to look with equanimity upon gain and loss, the desired and the hated, old age and death, joy and sorrow, hunger and thirst, fear and fearlessness, revulsion and inactivity, desire and anger, as well as decline and rise and, becoming free from all merits and sins which are the cause of transmigration, attain liberation and go beyond pleasure and pain.

वैशम्पायन उवाच--

ततो राजा धृतराष्ट्रो मनीषी  
संपूज्य वाक्यं विदुरेरितं तत्।  
सनत्सुजातं रहिते महात्मा  
पप्रच्छ बुद्धिं परमां बुभूषन्॥१

vaiSampAyana (who is the narrator of the story) said:--

tato rAjA dhrtarAshtro manIshI  
sampUjya vAkyam vidureritam tat |  
sanatsujAtam rahite mahAtmA  
papraccha buddhim paramAm bubhUshan | | 1

1.Honouring the words of vidura and desiring to attain to the state of supreme bliss which is the state of liberation, the wise and great king dhRtarAshTra requested sanatsujAta, the mind-born son of brahmA (the four-faced God), also known as sanatkumAra, to impart to him the knowledge about the supreme Realty.

धृतराष्ट्र उवाच--

सनत्सुजात यदिदं शृणोमि  
मृत्युर्हि नास्तीति तवोपदेशम्।  
देवासुरा आचरन् ब्रह्मचर्य-  
ममृत्यवे तत्कतरन्नु सत्यम्॥२

dhRtarAshtra asked:--

sanatsujAta yadidam SRNomi  
mRtyurhi nAstIti tavopadeSam |

devAsurA Acaran brahmacaryam  
amRtyave tat katarannu satyam | |2

2. O, sanatsujAta, I hear that you are instructing people that there is no such thing as death. On the contrary, it is said in the chAndogya upanishad that indra, the king of the gods and virocana, the king of the asuras, went to prajApati, to attain the knowledge that would make them immortal and practised celibacy as instructed by prajApati. So which is the truth? Is there death or is there no death?

Note: In chAndogya upanishad, VIII.7 this story is narrated. indra and virocana went to prajApati and prayed for the knowledge that would make them free from old age, death, hunger, thirst, and all other causes of sorrow. As instructed by prajApati they lived there the disciplined life of celibate students for thirty-two years. At the end of that period prajApati instructed them about the AtmA. Both of them misunderstood prajApati's instruction and left with the impression that the body itself was the AtmA. virocana went back to the asuras and instructed them accordingly. So, the upanishad says, the asuras adorn the body of a dead person with clothes and ornaments, considering it to be the AtmA. But indra felt, after going a little distance, that his understanding could not be correct because the body undergoes change all the time, whereas the AtmA is said to be changeless. So he went back to prajApati. The latter instructed him to observe celibacy for another thirty-two years. Again indra misunderstood prajApati's instruction at the end of that period, as meaning that the individual (jIva) in the dream state was the Atman. But he went back to prajApati on realizing his mistake. After he had stayed for another thirty-two years indra again misunderstood prajApati as saying that the jIva in the state of deep sleep was the AtmA. Again he realized his mistake and went back. Then prajApati asked him to stay for another five years. At the end of that period indra understood that the AtmA is beyond the states of waking, dream and deep sleep and beyond the body and mind. Thus indra spent a total of one hundred and one years as a celibate student to attain the knowledge that would make him immortal. dhRtarAshtra's question is, if there is no death at all, why should indra have taken so much trouble to become free from death?

श्रीसनत्सुजात उवाच--

अमृत्युः कर्मणा केचित् मृत्युर्नास्तीति चापरे ।

शृणु मे ब्रुवतो राजन् यथैतन्मा विशङ्किथाः ॥३

sanatsujAta replied:--

amRtyuh karmaNA kecit mRtyurnAstIti cApare |  
SRNu me bruvato rAjan yathaitat mA viSankithAh | |3

3. Some say that immortality is attained through the performance of Vedic rituals. Others hold that there is no death at all. O King, hear my explanation in this matter. Do not have any doubt.

Some people, being absolutely unenlightened, think that death is real and that it can be conquered by the performance of vedic rituals and therefore perform such rituals for attaining immortality. Some others, who are engrossed in sensual pleasures, think that a state of liberation in which there are no objects of enjoyment is not worth attaining. They quote a verse which says, “Even being a jackal in deserted vRndAvana is preferable to a liberation devoid of objects of enjoyment”. Therefore they strive to become gods in heaven by the performance of vedic rites. Yet others, who do not see a second entity different from paramAtmA, say that immortality is attained through a combination of rituals and knowledge. Still others, who hold that other than the non-dual AtmA there is nothing, say that there is no death at all, because the AtmA has neither birth nor death. I shall explain to you how these apparently contradictory views can be reconciled.

उभे सत्ये क्षत्रियाद्यप्रवृत्ते

मोहो मृत्युः संमतो यः कवीनाम् ।

प्रमादं वै मृत्युमहं ब्रवीमि

सदाप्रमादममृतत्वं ब्रवीमि ॥४

ubhe satye kshatriya AdyapravRtte  
moho mRtyuh sammato yah kavInAm |  
pramAdam vai mRtyumaham bravImi  
sadaa pramAdam amRtatvam bravImi | 4

4. Both the views, namely that there is death and there is no death, are true and have been prevalent since the beginning of creation. There would be contradiction between these two views if death were real, but that is not so. Some seers are of the view that delusion, which means looking upon the not-self as the self, is death. But I do not say so. I say that *pramAda*, which means fall from the state of being brahman, which is the natural state of all beings, is death. This *pramAda* is the cause of even false knowledge, the ignorance of the self and the seed of all calamities such as birth, death etc. So also, I say that being ever vigilant, and remaining established in one’s natural state as brahman, is immortality.

The Sruti says that being established in one’s real nature is liberation. The results of action (karma) fall into four categories:--production, attainment, modification and purification. Liberation, which is eternal, is not something produced. brahman, being the self of all, is ever present and does not need to be attained. brahman is changeless and so it cannot be the result of modification or purification of any other object. If liberation be the result of action, it will be impermanent, like the result of any action. Even action combined with knowledge (jnAna) cannot be the cause of liberation. Action, if performed without desire for the fruit,

purifies the mind and makes it fit for knowledge of brahman. The Sruti says that liberation can be attained through knowledge alone.

How is it known that *pramAda* is death and *apramAda*, ever being vigilant, is immortality? This is answered:--

प्रमादाद्वा असुराः पराभवन्  
अप्रमादाद्ब्रह्मभूताः सुराश्च ।  
न वै मृत्युर्व्याघ्र इवात्ति जन्तून्  
नाप्यस्य रूपमुपलभ्यते हि ॥५

pramAdAd vA asurAh parAbhavan  
apramAdAd brahmabhUtAh surASca |  
na vai mRtyurvyAghra iva atti jantUn  
nApyasya rUpamupalabhyate hi | | 5

5. The asuras failed (to realize the self) because of *pramAda*, while the devas realized their identity with brahman by *apramAda*. Death does not eat living beings like a tiger. Nor does it have any form.

Because of fall from their real nature as brahman and consequently looking upon the body as the self, the asuras, led by virocana, failed in their attempt to know brahman, as described in the chandogya upanishad. On the other hand, the devas, led by indra, attained realization of their identity with brahman, by remaining established in the knowledge that they were the non-dual Self which is Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. asuras are those who revel in sense-pleasures and are ignorant of the Self. They take birth as animals, etc. The gods are those who revel in the Self alone. By ever remaining vigilant in the knowledge that they are in reality brahman, they become free from nescience and its effects.

In the story of satyavAn and sAvitri in the mahAbhArata it is said that yama pulled out the thumb-sized soul of satyavAn from his body by tying it with a rope. So how can it be said that death has no form? This is answered:--

यमं त्वेके मृत्युमतोऽन्यमाहुः  
आत्मावासममृतं ब्रह्मचर्यम् ।  
पितृलोके राज्यमनुशास्ति देवः  
शिवः शिवानामशिवोऽशिवानाम् ॥६

yamam tveke mRtyum ato'nyamAhuh  
AtmAvAsam amRtam brahmacaryam |  
pitRloke rAjyam anuSasti devah  
Sivah SivAnAm aSivo'SivAnAm | | 6

6. Some say that yama is Death. He resides in the hearts of all beings. He is immortal and is established in brahman. He is the god who rules over the world of the manes. He bestows happiness on the virtuous and is ill-disposed towards evil-doers.

No doubt, yama, who is described as Death by some, has a form. But he is not the real death. Ignorance, which has been referred to as *pramAda* or absence of constant awareness of one's real nature, is the real death, because it is the cause of spiritual destruction. The Kena upanishad says (II.5):-- "There is great loss if brahman is not realized here (in this life itself)". In bRhadAraNyakopanishad ignorance, which is called *pramAda*, is shown to be the real death (Br.up.1.3.28):-- "Darkness is death and light is immortality". Since *pramAda* or lack of constant awareness of one's real nature is the actual seed of all suffering, one should never be devoid of such awareness. One should ever remain established in the awareness that one is the non-dual brahman who is Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. The Lord also has stated that ignorance is the cause of bondage and knowledge is the cause of liberation in the bhagavadGItA, 5.15:--"Knowledge is covered by ignorance and so all beings are deluded".

For the very reason that lack of awareness of one's real nature is death and awareness is immortality, and for the reason that liberation is ever present and ever attained, it cannot be produced or attained by action (karma). The br. up. says (4.4.23):- "This is the eternal glory of a knower of brahman; it neither increases nor decreases because of any action. Hence one should know the nature of that glory. Knowing it, one is not affected even by evil action". The SvetASvatara upanishad says (3.8):-- "Knowing That alone, one goes beyond death. There is no other way to reach the goal". The statement in the br. up (4.4.21), "The intelligent seeker of Brahman, knowing about this alone, should attain intuitive knowledge", emphasizes that knowledge alone is the means to liberation. The muNDakopanishad says (3.1.8):-- "It is not perceived by the eye, nor expressed by speech, nor known through the other senses; nor is it attained through austerity or karma. It can be attained only through meditation by an intellect which has become absolutely pure". It will be said in this text itself (chapter 3, verse 18):- "O King! Those who are devoted to karma alone attain to worlds which are impermanent as the fruit of their karma. But by knowledge one attains to the eternal light. There is no other means to attain that". And also in 1.16:--"Knowing that death which is known as *pramAda* appears in the form of anger etc., one gets rid of these defects and, cultivating freedom from anger, etc, remains established as the non-dual Existence-Consciousness-Bliss and does not fear death at all". So also in moksha dharma "One becomes bound by karma and is liberated by knowledge. Therefore aspirants for liberation who are farsighted do not perform karma (motivated by desire)". And also:- "Knowledge is superior, and not vedic sacrifice. Obstruction to

liberation is crossed over by knowledge and not by sacrifices”. So also, bhagavAn manu who considers knowledge to be the sole means of liberation prescribes renunciation of all action thus: “The wise man, giving up all the aforesaid actions, devotes himself to self-knowledge, quietude and study of the vedas” (12.92).

In that case does it mean that the actions prescribed in the vedas need not be performed at all? Not so. They are to be performed, but not by those who have already realized the Self. So Lord kRshNa says in bhagavadgItA (3.17): “For the man who ever revels in the Self and is contented with the Self alone (not dependent on sense objects for happiness), there is no duty to be performed”.

The rituals prescribed in the Vedas are to be performed only by those who have not yet realized Brahman and who aspire for liberation. Lord Krishna has said in chapter 3 of the bhagavadgItA that two paths have been laid down by Him from ancient times, the path of action for spiritual aspirants and the path of renunciation and pursuit of Self-knowledge for those who have attained total detachment towards all worldly actions. The spiritual aspirant should perform all actions without desire for the fruit and as an offering to God, in order that the actions may not cause bondage. It is said in the bhagavadgItA (3.9): One becomes bound by actions other than those dedicated to God; therefore actions should be performed without attachment and as an offering to God. Such actions lead to purity of the mind. Only when the mind has been cleansed of all taint can realization of the Self arise. In ISAvAsyopaniṣad in the first mantra it is said that the world perceived by the senses should be covered by God, i.e. everything in this world should be looked upon as the manifestation of God. For attaining this goal renunciation of all worldly pursuits is laid down as a necessary condition. In the second mantra it is said that those who are unable to renounce action should perform them for attaining purity of mind. These statements establish that action is only the means to purity of mind and not to liberation. Liberation is attained only through Self-knowledge, but knowledge does not arise unless the mind has become pure, i.e. free from desire and the concomittant emotions such as anger, greed, etc.

आस्यादेष निःसरते नराणां

क्रोधः प्रमादो मोहरूपश्च मृत्युः ।

अहंगतेनैव चरन् विमार्गान्

न चात्मनो योगमुपैति किञ्चित् ॥७

AsyAdesha nissarate narANAm  
krodhah pramAdo moharUpaSca mRtyuh |  
ahamgatenaiiva caranvimArgAn  
na cAtmano yogam upaiti kincit | | 7

7. Death in the form of ignorance of one's real nature, which has been called 'pramAda', manifests at first as the ego. (In this verse the word 'Asya' has been given the meaning 'ego' by SrI Sankara). Then it becomes desire. When desire is thwarted it turns into anger, pramAda (fall from one's natural state of identity with Brahman), and delusion. Because of this ego he identifies himself as a brAhmaNa, kshatriya, stout, lean, son of so and so, etc. As a result he becomes affected by attachment and aversion and goes into wrong paths. He then loses all chances of realizing his identity with brahman.

Ignorance of one's real nature is the cause of desire. A person who has realized that he is brahman sees nothing other than himself, because brahman is all. Desire is always for something other than oneself. When one realizes that everything is brahman there can be no desire. Desire leads to action for its fulfillment. This is the cause of the continuous chain of births and deaths.

ते मोहितास्तद्वशे वर्तमाना  
इतः प्रेतास्तत्र पुनः पतन्ति ।  
ततस्तं देवा अनु परिप्लवन्ते  
अतो मृत्युं मरणादभ्युपैति ॥८

te mohitAstadvaSe vartamAnA  
itah pretAstatra punah patanti |  
tatastam devA anu pariplavante  
ato mRtyum maraNAdabhyupaiti || 8

8. Being deluded by ignorance which has become transformed as the ego, etc., they look upon the body, etc., as the self and remain under the control of death in the form of pramAda (fall from their real nature). When they die their souls depart by the path of smoke, etc., and after sojourn in other worlds according to their merit they return to this earth. Then they act according to the dictates of their sense-organs for sensual pleasures alone. Then again they die and are born again. Thus they continue in this endless chain of births and deaths and never attain release. This continues as long as they do not realize their real nature as the supreme brahman.

It has been shown that ignorance and desire are the causes of bondage. Now it is explained how actions lead to bondage:

कर्मोदये कर्मफलानुरागाः  
तत्रानुयान्ति न तरन्ति मृत्युम् ।  
सदर्थयोगानवगमात्समन्तात्  
प्रवर्तते भोगयोगेन देही ॥९



karmodaye karmaphalAnurAgAh  
 tatranuyAnti na taranti mRtyum |  
 sadarthayogAnavagamAtsamantAt  
 pravartate bhogayogena dehi ||9

9. The person who performs an action becomes attached to its result. This leads to another birth to enjoy the results. Thus he can never get release from the chain of births and deaths. Because of not realizing his identity with brahman he pursues sense-pleasures alone.

In this verse the view of the pUrvamImAmsakas that immortality can be attained through action is refuted.

तद्वै महामोहनमिन्द्रियाणां  
 मिथ्यार्थयोगोऽस्य गतिर्हि नित्या ।  
 मिथ्यार्थयोगाभिहतान्तरात्मा  
 स्मरन्नुपास्ते विषयान् समन्तात् ॥१०

tadvai mahAmohanamindriyANAm  
 mithyArthayogasya gatihhi nityA |  
 mithyArthayogAbhihatAntarAtmA  
 smarannupAste vishayAn samantAt || 10

10. Attachment to sense-objects which are all unreal (mithyA) is what causes the greatest delusion to the sense-organs. This attachment is permanent. One who is overcome by attachment to sense objects always thinks only of them (and never of the means to liberation).

अभिध्या वै प्रथमं हन्ति चैनं  
 कामक्रोधौ गृह्य चैनं तु पश्चात् ।  
 एते बालान् मृत्यवे प्रापयन्ति  
 धीरास्तु धैर्येण तरन्ति मृत्युम् ॥११

abhidhya vai prathamam hanti cainam  
 kAmakrodhau gRhya cainam tu paScAt |  
 ete bAlAn mRtyave prApayanti  
 dhIrAstu dhairyeNa taranti mRtyum || 11

11. Constant thinking of sense-objects first destroys him, i.e. makes him fall from his real state. Then desire and anger take hold of him and bring about his downfall. These three make the unwise who lack discrimination subject to death (repeated transmigration). Those, however, who with determination conquer the desire for sense-objects, cross over death.

योऽभिध्यायन्नृत्पतिष्णून्निहन्या-  
 दनाचारेणाप्रतिबुध्यमानः ।  
 स वै मृत्युं मृत्युरिवात्ति भूत्वा  
 ह्येवं विद्वान्योऽभिहन्तीह कामान् ॥१२

yo`bhidhyAyannutpatishNUn nihanyAt  
 anAcAreNApratibudhyamAnaH |  
 sa vai mRtyum mRtyurivAtti bhUtvA  
 hyevam vidvAn yo`bhihantIha kAmAn || 12

12. He who summarily rejects sense-objects which come up, realizing that they are ephemeral, impure, and leading only to sorrow, and never even thinks of them becomes the death of death itself. He who knows this overcomes all desires.

कामानुसारी पुरुषः कामाननु विनश्यति ।  
 कामान् व्युदस्य धुनुते यत्किंचित्पुरुषो रजः ॥१३

kAmAnusArI purushaH kAmAnanu vinaSyati |  
 kAmAn vyudasya dhunute yatkimcit purusho rajah || 13

13. One who is intent only on the fulfillment of his desires perishes along with the objects of his desire. By renouncing desires with right discrimination he becomes free from all his accumulated merit and demerit (puNya and pApa). (puNya is also an obstacle to liberation because it gives rise to another birth. So one has to become free from both puNya and pApa).

देहोऽप्रकाशो भूतानां नरकोऽयं प्रदृश्यते ।  
 गृध्यन्त एव धावन्ति गच्छन्तः श्वभ्रमुन्मुखाः ॥१४

deho`prakASo bhUtAnAm narako`yam pradRSyate |  
 gRdhyanta eva dhAvanti gacchantah SvabhramunmukhAH || 14

14. The body is insentient. It is seen to be hell itself because it is constituted of impure ingredients such as skin, bone, blood, etc., and contains phlegm, urine, excreta, etc., within. Those who are attached to the body and are ever running after sense pleasures go only to hell.

अमन्यमानः क्षत्रिय कश्चिदन्यं  
 नाधीयते तार्ण इवास्य व्याघ्रः ।  
 क्रोधाल्लोभान्मोहभयान्तरात्मा  
 स वै मृत्युस्त्वच्छरीरे य एषः ॥१५

amanyamAnah kshatriya kaScidanyam  
 nAdhlyate tArNa ivAsya vyAghrah |  
 krodhAllobhAnmohabhayAntarAtmA  
 sa vai mRtyustvaccharIre ya eshah || 15

15. He who is blinded by desires for sense-objects does not know about his own Self which is different from them. He does not study the scriptures which impart knowledge of the Self. Even if such a person has studied all the vedas with their six limbs, he is worthless like a tiger made of straw. Sage vasishTha has said: “A brAhmaNa, who, though he has studied all the four vedas, has not realized the subtle brahman, is like a donkey struggling under the load of the vedas”. Not only is his body worthless, but he is his own death. Because of anger and greed his mind is full of delusion and fear. Such a mind in his own body is his own death.

bhagavadgItA says, “One is one’s own friend and one is one’s own enemy” (Ch. 6.5).

एवं मृत्युं जायमानं विदित्वा  
 ज्ञानेन तिष्ठन्न बिभेति मृत्योः ।  
 विनश्यते विषये यस्य मृत्युः  
 मृत्योर्यथा विषयं प्राप्य मर्त्यः ॥१६

evam mRtyum jAyamAnam veditvA  
 jnAnena tishThan na bibheti mRtyoh |  
 vinaSyate vishaye yasya mRtyuh  
 mRtyoryathA vishayam prApya martyah || 16

16. Thus, knowing that death which is called pramAda and manifests itself as anger, etc., is the seed of all evils such as birth, death, etc., one should give up anger, etc which consume one. By cultivating freedom from anger etc., one realizes the non-dual Bliss-Consciousness and has no more any fear of death. Such a person conquers death in the form of ignorance, while one who indulges only in sense pleasures is overcome by death.

It has thus been shown that actions lead to bondage and Self-knowledge alone is the means to liberation.

धृतराष्ट्र उवाच --  
 यानेवाहुरिज्यया साधुलोकान्  
 द्विजातीनां पुण्यतमान् सनातनान् ।  
 तेषां परार्थं कथयन्तीह वेदा  
 एतद्विद्वान्नैति कथं नु कर्म ॥१७

dhRtarAshtra said:

yAnevAhurijyayA sAdhulokAn  
dvijAtInAm puNyatamAn sanAtanAn |  
teshAm parArtham kathayantIha vedA  
etadvidvAn naiti katham nu karma || 17

17. How can action cause bondage? It has been said in the vedas that by performing sacrifices the eternal higher worlds meant for meritorious souls are attained. These are described as the highest human goals. Knowing this, why would persons not perform such sacrifices?

सनत्सुजात उवाच--

एवं ह्यविद्वान् परियाति तत्र  
तथार्थजातं च वदन्ति वेदाः ।  
स नेहायाति परं परात्मा  
प्रयाति मार्गेण निहन्त्यमार्गान् ॥१८

sanatsujAta replied:

evam hyavidvAn pariyAti tatra  
tathArthajAtam ca vadanti vedAh |  
sa nehAyAti param parAtmA  
prayAti mArgeNa nihantyamArgAn || 18

18. It is only the ignorant man who performs karma for attaining such worlds. The vedas prescribe karma only for such ignorant persons. But the person who realizes that his self is identical with the supreme Self does not take to the path of karma. By taking the right path of knowledge he rejects all wrong paths.

The higher worlds attained by the performance of vedic karma all fall within the sphere of transmigratory existence. The happiness attained there is transient. Such persons will be born again on this earth on the exhaustion of the merit acquired by them. Only the realization of one's identity with brahman leads to infinite and eternal happiness.

धृतराष्ट्र उवाच--

कोऽसौ नियुङ्क्ते तमजं पुराणं  
स चेदिदं सर्वमनुक्रमेण ।  
कि वास्य कार्यमथवासुखं च  
तन्मे विद्वन् ब्रूहि सर्वं यथावत् ॥१९

dhRtarAshtra said:

ko'sau niyungkte tamajam purANam  
sa ceditam sarvamanukrameNa |

kim vAsya kAryamathavAsukham ca  
tanme vidvan brUhi sarvam yathAvat || 19

19. If it is the Supreme Being Himself who creates the entire universe constituted of the five elements from ether to earth and, entering all the jIvas, takes the form of the five sheaths, etc., and transmigrates, who is it that makes him do so? If he does it on his own, what purpose does he achieve by taking birth in various wombs? Or, since He is established in his own glory, what adverse result can befall to Him by not doing so? O learned one, be kind enough to explain all this to me exactly as it is.

सनत्सुजात उवाच---

दोषो महानत्र विभेदयोगे

ह्यनादियोगेन भवन्ति नित्याः ।

तथास्य नाधिक्यमपैति किञ्चित्

अनादियोगेन भवन्ति पुंसः ॥२०

sanatsujAta said:

dosho mahAnatra vibhedayoge  
hyanAdiyogena bhavanti nityAh |  
tathAsya nAdhikyamapaiti kincit  
anAdiyogena bhavanti pumsah || 20

20. If multiplicity is accepted in brahman it will be a great defect, because non-duality will be contradicted. Moreover, if brahman is considered as having taken different forms, then brahman will be impermanent. If difference between the jIva and brahman is accepted, then also there are serious adverse consequences as seen from the statements in the upanishads, "One who sees even the slightest difference between the two is beset by fear", and "One who sees multiplicity goes from death to death". The statements such as "That thou art", "I am brahman", etc., will also be contradicted. But from the empirical standpoint brahman and the jIva appear different because of beginningless association with mAyA. brahman appears as the innumerable jIvas because of mAyA. The jIvas, being in reality identical with brahman, are eternal. The upanishads say: 'The jIva never dies' (ch.up. 6.11.3), 'That birthless Self is undecaying, immortal, undying, fearless, and brahman itself' (br.up. IV. iv. 25). But in spite of appearing as jIvas brahman's immutability and infinitude are not affected at all. The jIvas appear only because of mAyA which has no beginning.

यदेतदद्वा भगवान् स नित्यं

विकारयोगेन करोति विश्वम् ।

तथा च तच्छक्तिरिति स्म मन्ये  
तदर्थयोगे च भवन्ति वेदाः ॥२१

yadetadaddhA bhagavAn sa nityam  
vikArayogena karoti viSvam |  
tathA ca tacchaktiriti sma manye  
tadarthayoge ca bhavanti vedAh ||21

21. The creation of the universe is done by mAyA, the power of the supreme Being, by the mere will of brahman. The pure non-dual brahman who is Consciousness-Bliss is not by Himself the cause of creation, but only because of association with mAyA. The vedas bear testimony to this in innumerable statements such as, 'indra (the Lord) through his power, mAyA, assumes many forms', 'From this mAyA He creates the universe', etc.

धृतराष्ट्र उवाच--

यस्माद्धर्मानाचरन्तीह केचित्  
तथाधर्मान् केचिदिहाचरन्ति ।  
धर्मः पापेन प्रतिहन्यते वा  
उताहो धर्मः प्रतिहन्ति पापम् ॥२२

dhRtarAshtra said:  
yasmAddharmAn AcarantIha kecit  
tathA adharmAn kecidihAcaranti |  
dharmah pApena pratihanyate vA  
utAho dharmah pratihanti pApam ||22

22. In this world people perform righteous deeds as well as unrighteous deeds. Is the merit acquired by righteous deeds destroyed by the sin resulting from unrighteous deeds, or does the merit destroy the sins? The idea is, do merit (puNya) and sin (pApa) cancel each other, or do their fruits have to be experienced separately?

सनत्सुजात उवाच--

तस्मिन्स्थितो वाप्युभयं हि नित्यं  
ज्ञानेन विद्वान्प्रतिहन्ति सिद्धम् ।  
अथान्यथा पुण्यमुपैति देही  
तथागतं पापमुपैति सिद्धम् ॥२३

sanatsujAta said:  
tasmin sthito vApyubhayam hi nityam

jnAnena vidvAn pratihanti siddham |  
athAnyathA puNyamupaiti dehI  
tathAgatham pApamupaiti siddham ||23

23. The enlightened person destroys both merit and sin by virtue of having realized the Self. This is well known from the scriptures. The unenlightened person who identifies himself with his body experiences the fruits of both merit and sin separately. (They do not cancel each other). This is also well known from the scriptures.

गत्वोभयं कर्मणा भुज्यतेऽस्थिरं  
शुभस्य पापस्य स चापि कर्मणा ।  
धर्मेण पापं प्रणुदतीह विद्वान्  
धर्मो बलीयानिति तस्य विद्धि ॥२४

gatvobhayam karmaNA bhujyate'sthiram  
Subhasya pApasya sa caapi karmaNA |  
dharmeNa pApam praNudatIha vidvAn  
dharmo ballyAniti tasya viddhi ||24

24. The unenlightened person goes to other worlds taking the fruits of his good and bad karma with him. These fruits, which are impermanent, are experienced by him. The wise man who dedicates all his actions to God destroys his sins with his merits. His merits are stronger than his sins.

येषां धर्मेषु विस्पर्धा  
बले बलवतामिव ।  
ते ब्राह्मणा इतः प्रेत्य  
स्वर्गे यान्ति प्रकाशताम् ॥२५  
येषां धर्मे न च स्पर्धा  
तेषां तज्ज्ञानसाधनम् ।  
ते ब्राह्मणा इतो मुक्ताः  
स्वर्गं यान्ति त्रिविष्टपम् ॥२६

yeshAm dharmeshu vispardhA  
bale balavatAmiva |  
te brAhmaNA itah pretya  
svarge yAnti prakASatAm ||25  
yeshAm na ca spardhA  
teshAm tajjnAnasAdhanam |  
te brAhmaNA ito muktAh

svargam yAnti trivishTapam ||26

25 & 26. Those persons who are entitled to perform sacrifices and perform them in a spirit of competition with the aim of excelling all others and thus become eligible to enjoy all the pleasures of heaven, just as a strong king tries to become stronger than other kings and wants to vanquish them all, go after death through the southern path ( the path of smoke, night, etc.) and shine in heaven like stars, etc. (They are born again on this earth on the exhaustion of their merit). But, for those who are not attracted by the pleasures of heaven, the sacrifices performed by them without desire for the fruit and as an offering to God become the means of attaining realization by purifying the mind. They are liberated and realize their identity with brahman who is supreme bliss.

Note. The word 'brAhmaNa' has been interpreted by SrI Sankara as 'those who are eligible to perform sacrifices'. The words 'svargam trivishTapam' mean brahman.

तस्य सम्यक्समाचारमाहुर्वेदविदो जनाः।

नैनं मन्येत भूयिष्ठं बाह्यमाभ्यन्तरं जनम् ॥२७॥

tasya samyaksamAcAramAhurvedavido janAH |

nainam manyeta bhUyishTham bAhyamAbhyantaram janam ||27

27. Knowers of the vedas say that the conduct of such a person (as the one mentioned in the previous verse) should be such that neither those who are close to him (wife, son, friends) nor outsiders think highly about him. (He is so humble that even those very close to him do not know his greatness).

यन्न मन्येत भूयिष्ठं प्रावृषीव तृणोदकम् ।

अन्नपानं च ब्राह्मणस्तज्जीवेन्नानुसंज्वरेत् ॥२८॥

yatra manyeta bhUyishTham prAvRshIva tRNodakam |

annapAnaM ca brAhmaNastajjIvennAnusamjvaret ||28

28. He should live in a place where there is abundance of food and water, just as grass and water are abundant during the rainy season. He should not worry about getting food and water. Such worry is an obstacle to meditation.

यत्राकथयमानस्य प्रयच्छत्यशिवं भयम् ।

अतिरिक्तमिवाकुर्वन् श्रेयान्नेतरो जनः ॥२९॥

yatrAkathayamAnasya prayacchatyaSivam bhayam |

atiriktamivAkurvan sa SreyAnnetaro janah ||29

29. The place should be one where the people around, seeing that he never speaks, never reveals his knowledge, and behaves like an inert being, a dumb man or an idiot, ridicule and humiliate him, being



unaware of his greatness. He should not stay where the people are different, i.e., where the people prostrate before him and honour him. Manu says that an enlightened person should shun honour like poison. He should welcome humiliation like nectar.

यो वाकथयमानस्य ह्यात्मानं नानुसंज्वरेत् ।

ब्रह्मस्वं नोपहन्याद्वा तदन्नं संमतं सताम् ॥३०

yo vAkathayamAnasya hyAtmAnam nAnusamjvaret |

brahmasvam nopahanyAdvA tadannam sammatam satAm ||30

30. The food fit to be taken by such a person is what is offered by a person who does not trouble him and who does not cause any damage to the articles that he needs for meditation such as bark garment, deer skin, books, etc.

नित्यमज्ञातचर्या म इति मन्येत ब्राह्मणः ।

ज्ञातीनां तु वसन्मध्ये नैव विन्देत किञ्चन ॥३१

nityamajnAtacarya ma iti manyeta brAhmaNah |

jnAtInAm tu vasan madhye naiva vindeta kincana ||31

31. The knower of Brahman should take care to see that his actions and movements always remain unknown to others. He will not gain anything by remaining in the midst of his relations. He should not consider himself as the son of so and so, etc., but should always have his mind fixed on Brahman. Or another meaning is: he should consider himself as a mere witness to whatever is experienced by his sense-organs and should not become involved in them. (Here brAhmaNah means 'knower of Brahman'. The word jnAti can also be taken to mean 'sense-organs' according to Sri Sankara).

को ह्येवमन्तरात्मानं ब्राह्मणो मन्तुमर्हति ।

निर्लिङ्गमचलं शुद्धं सर्वद्वन्द्वविवर्जितम् ॥३२

ko hyevamantarAtmAnam brAhmaNo mantumarhati |

nirlingamacalam Suddham sarvadvandvavivarjitam ||32

32. Which enlightened person can know the indwelling Self (as an object) —the Self that has no indicatory marks such as quality, action, etc., is immovable, pure, and beyond all duality? The idea is that the Self is not an object of knowledge.

योऽन्यथा सन्तमात्मानमन्यथा प्रतिपद्यते ।

किं तेन न कृतं पापं चोरेणात्मापहारिणा ॥३३

yo'nyathA santamAtmAnam anyathA pratipadyate |

kim tena na kRtam pApam coreNAtmApahAriNa ||33

33. He who understands the Self that is pure consciousness, devoid of indicatory marks, pure, beyond all duality, non-dual existence-consciousness-bliss, differently, as having the qualities of the gross and subtle bodies, as a doer, enjoyer, happy, unhappy, stout, or lean, etc., what a great sin does he not commit? By understanding the Self wrongly in this manner he 'steals' the Self, as it were.

अश्रान्तः स्यादनादाता

संमतो निरुपद्रवः ।

शिष्टो न शिष्टवत्स स्या-

द्ब्राह्मणो ब्रह्मवित्कविः ॥३४

aSrAntah syAdanAdAtA

sammato nirupadravah |

SishTo na SishTavatsa syAd

brAhmaNo brahmavit kavih | |34

34. He who does not identify the not-Self with the Self is not affected by the sorrows of the world. He is not tainted by anger, greed, desire, delusion, etc. He is accepted by the enlightened . But he himself behaves like an inert being and does not display his knowledge. Such a person is a knower of Brahman and a sage.

ये यथा वान्तमश्नन्ति बाला नित्यमभूतये ।

एवं ते वान्तमश्नन्ति स्ववीर्यस्योपभोजनात् ॥३५

ye yathA vAntamaSnanti bAlA nityamabhUtaye |

evam te vAntamaSnanti svavIryasyopabhojanAt | |35

35. Dogs eat their own vomit and children may also do the same sometimes. For an enlightened person, proclaiming his own glory to the world is tantamount to eating vomit. It is disastrous for him. He should always behave in such a way that people do not know his greatness.

अनाढ्या मानुषे वित्ते आढ्या वेदेषु ये द्विजाः ।

ते दुर्धर्षा दुष्प्रकम्प्या विद्यात्तान् ब्रह्मणस्तनुम् ॥३६

anADhyA mAnushe vitte AdhyA vedeshu ye dvijAh |

te durdharshA dushprakampyA vidyAt tAn brahmaNastanum | |36

36. Those who are not attached to worldly possessions or to wife, son, etc., but only to the virtues laid down in the vedas such as non-injury, truth, non-stealing, non-acceptance of gifts, celibacy, contemplation, etc., should be looked upon as brahman itself.

सर्वान् स्विष्टकृतो देवान् विद्याद्य इह कश्चन ।  
न समानो ब्राह्मणस्य यस्मिन्प्रयतते स्वयम् ॥३७

sarvAn svishTakRto devAn vidyAdya iha kaScana |  
na samAno brAhmaNasya yasmin prayatate svayam ||37  
37. One who knows how to invoke the deities such as agni who confer benefits, and performs sacrifices to them is not by any means equal to a knower of brahman. Even the deity to whom sacrifice is performed is not equal to a knower of brahman. bhagavAn manu has said, “ There is none superior to the knower of brahman”.

यमप्रयतमानं तु मानयन्ति स मानितः ।  
न मान्यमानो मन्येत नावमाने विसंज्वरेत् ॥३८

yamaprayatamAnam tu mAnayanti sa mAnitah |  
Na mAnyamAno manyeta nAvamAne visamjvaret ||38  
38. If people who know his greatness honour a realized soul, even though he does not indulge in any activity, he should not feel that it is he who is being honoured and should not be elated by such honour. On the other hand, if people, not knowing his greatness, treat him with contempt and ridicule him, he should not be affected in the least.

लोकस्वभाववृत्तिर्हि निमेषोन्मेषवत्सदा ।  
विद्वांसो मानयन्तीह इति मन्येत मानितः ॥३९  
अधर्मविदुषो मूढा लोकशास्त्रविवर्जिताः ।  
न मान्यं मानयिष्यन्ति इति मन्येदमानितः॥४०

lokasvabhAvavRttirhi nimeshonmeshavat sadA |  
vidvAmso mAnayantIha iti manyeta mAnitah ||39  
adharmavidusho mUDhA lokaSAstravivarjitAh |  
na mAnyam mAnayishyanti iti manyed amAnitah ||40  
39 & 40. If wise people honour a realized soul, he should consider it to be as natural to them as winking of the eye. Similarly, if people who are ignorant of the scriptures and who are devoid of discriminating capacity despise him, he should consider it as their nature not to honour those who deserve to be honoured.

न वै मानश्च मौनं च सहितौ वसतः सदा ।  
अयं मानस्य विषयो ह्यसौ मौनस्य तद्विदुः ॥४१

na vai mAnaSca maunam ca sahitau vasatah sadA |  
ayam mAnasya vishayo hyasau maunasya tadviduh ||41

41. Honour and contemplation cannot co-exist. Honour has as its sphere this world, while contemplation has as its object brahman. (The idea is that those who aspire for honour have their sights fixed on worldly activities, while the contemplatives are rooted in brahman).

श्रीर्हि मानार्थसंवासा-

त्सा चापि परिपन्थिनी ।

ब्राह्मी सुदुर्लभा श्रीर्हि

प्रज्ञाहीनेन क्षत्रिय ॥ ४२

SrIrhi mAnArthasamvAsAt

sA cApi paripanthinI |

brAhmI sudurlabhA SrIrhi

prajnAhInena kshatriya || 42

42. One acquires worldly prosperity if one is engaged in the sphere relating to honour (worldly activities). But this is an obstacle (to liberation). The wealth that is brahman is impossible to get for such a person who is devoid of wisdom.

द्वाराणि सम्यक्प्रवदन्ति सन्तो

बहुप्रकाराणि दुराचराणि ।

सत्यार्जवे ह्रीर्दमशौचविद्याः

षण्मानमोहप्रतिबन्धकानि ॥४३

dvArANi samyak pravadanti santo

bahuprakArANi durAcarANi |

satyArjave hrIrdamaSaucavidyAh

shaNmAnamohapratibandhakAni || 43

43. The wise speak of many ways for the attainment of brahman, which are difficult to practise. These are six: truth, rectitude, humility, control of the senses, purity of mind, and knowledge. These help to keep out pride and delusion.

इति श्रीमत्सनत्सुजातीये प्रथमोऽध्यायः॥

End of chapter 1





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