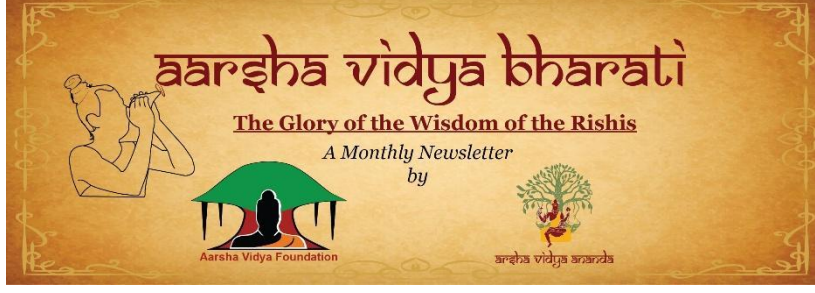

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Karmaṇā na Mokṣaḥ

By Kamini Asrani, Mumbai

One cannot get *Mokṣa* by karma.

What do we mean by *Mokṣa*? *Mokṣa* is freedom from the cycle of birth and death, by the understanding of Brahman and finally assimilating this knowledge of *Brahman* to culminate it in अहम् ब्रह्मास्मि, *aham brahmāsmi*.

In this world we achieve everything by doing *karma*, then why can't *karma* give me *Mokṣa*? We need to understand *karma*.

Being ignorant of my own true nature, I have taken myself to be this limited body. mind sense complex i.e. देहः मनः प्राणः बुद्धि अहंकारः, *dehaḥ manaḥ prāṇaḥ buddhi ahaṅkāraḥ*. This sense of finitude makes me feel small and insecure. The world looms large and seems to stand opposing me.

Hence अज्ञानम् संसार कारणम्, *ajñānam saṁsāra kāraṇam*. Since ignorance (अज्ञानम्, *ajñānam*) is the cause, ज्ञानम्, *jñānam* will be the solution.

Hence ज्ञानम्, *jñānam* is *Mokṣa* कारणम्, *kāraṇam*. *Mokṣa* is the understanding of *Brahman*.

How can *ajñānam* be *saṁsāra kāraṇam*? Due to ignorance of non-duality we have a perception of duality (*advaita ajñānāt dvaita darśanam*). Due to *dvaita darśanam* we have a tendency to add a subjective value (*śobhanā adhyāsa*) to things, people and situations. This leads to *rāga-dveṣa* i.e like of the favourable and dislike of the unfavourable. *Rāga-dveṣa* impels me to act. These actions may be *dhārmika* but at times can be *adhārmika* also.



Actions give results (*puṇya - pāpa*) which lead to देह प्राप्ति, *deha prāpti* and we get various births. Therefore, *ajñānam* is *samsāra kāraṇam*. Any number of *karma* (*laukika* or *vaidika*) cannot remove ignorance.

Next अविद्या काम कारक, *avidyā kāma kāraka*. Ignorance is the cause of *karma*. *Karma* cannot negate it's own cause - ignorance. Ignorance needs to be negated for *mokṣa*. *Karma* goes a step further and perpetuates the misconception that I am a *kartā bhoktā* (doer-experiencer).

Self-ignorance nourishes *karma*. *Karma* is *anitya* i.e. *karma* is a process, it has a beginning and an end. It is an event in time. *Karma* is पुरुष तन्त्रं *puruṣa tantram* and *jñānam* is वस्तु तन्त्रं, *vastu tantram*. *Karma* is *anitya* and hence the फलम् *phalam* of *karma* too is *anitya*.



Karma can give four finite results only. We can do *karma* –

To produce something	i.e. <i>utpadya</i>
To purify something	i.e. <i>samskaryam</i>
To modify something	i.e. <i>vikāryam</i>
To reach somewhere	i.e. <i>āpyam</i>

Mokṣa is not the end product of any spiritual साधना, *sādhana*. It is not an event in time. It is your own true nature, which is *nityam*. The Vedas say *Brahman* is स्वत सिद्धम्, सर्वदा आप्यम्, शुद्धं निर्मलम्, अक्रियम्, अविकार्यम्. *Brahman* does not fit into any कर्म

फलम् *karma phalam*.

Brahman is

1. स्वत सिद्धम् *svata siddham* i.e. an eternally available entity (वस्तु, *vastu*). Being eternal, it cannot be produced.
2. सर्वदा आप्यम्, *sarvadā āpyam* i.e. ever accomplished. Thus *Brahman* cannot and need not be reached, *āpyam*.
3. शुद्धं निर्मलम् *śuddham nirmalam* i.e. pure and without impurities. (There is no other *vastu* besides *Brahman*, so it cannot be contaminated). It does not require *samskaryam*, refinement.
4. अक्रियम् *akriyam* and अविकार्यम् *avikāryam* *Brahman* is changeless and thus cannot be modified.

Thus *Brahman* cannot be understood by *karma*.

Karma is *samsāra kāraṇam*. Understanding *Brahman* and owning up to my own true nature i.e *Mokṣa* can be only on negation of *samsāra* i.e. by negation of the cause of *karma* which is ignorance.

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