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My Father's Books on Veda – A Synopsis

UNDERSTANDING VEDA - KARMA KANDA (Path of rituals) Vol.1 and Vol.2 , written by G.K. KANNAN (my father) are BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN publications.

- 95% of Vedic contents deal with the path of rituals (Karma Kanda), while, only 5% is on Vedanta (Jnana Kanda).
- The rituals (correctly called Samskaras) are designed to purify a person throughout his life, from the womb to the tomb.
- Through simple English in the form of Questions and Answers, the 2 volumes cover the entire gamut of the rituals in Veda.
- The sequential order of a Karma, the gist of Mantra meanings, the rationale behind the performance are also given, so that a person attending or performing the purificatory act (like marriage, naming of child, funeral rites etc.) can do so with understanding and enjoyment.

The main contents are enumerated below:

Vol.1 (Grhya Karmas) – Has 4 sub-books or sections within it

Section 1 :

Introductory Questions and Answers dealing with Sanatana Dharma, also called Hinduism and its tenets like

- (1) Rebirth
- (2) Speciality of Hinduism
- (3) Punya & Papa Karmas (Merited & Sinful actions)
- (4) Are rituals superstitious?
- (5) Rituals versus Social service

- (6) Are prayers selfish?
- (7) Panchanga (Almanac)
- (8) Relevance of women
- (9) Why funeral rites?
- (10) Debt discharge acts to Devas, Pitrs, society, environment etc.

Section 2 :

Nitya/Naimittika Karmas like Snana, Sandhya Vandana, BrahmaYajna, Aupasana, Tarpana, Homa, Upakarma, Vaisavadeva Bali.

Section 3: Grhya Karmas like Garbhadhana, Pumsavana, Simantonnayana, Jatakarma, NamaKarana (Naming of child), Anna Prasana (child's first intake of solid food), Caula (child's first shaving of head), Upanayana (Sacred Thread Ceremony), Vivaha (marriage), Panca mahaa yajna (5 great sacrifices).

Section 4 :Different Paka Yajnas, Sraddha, Antyeshti (funeral rites)

- Most of the Hindus perform the above Samskaras, but without a full understanding of the significance.
- The rest do not perform, because of a lack of understanding of the significance.

Vol . 2 (Srauta Karmas) –

- Questions and Answers,
- Contents of 4 Vedas,
- 7 Haviryajnas like Darsa Purna Masa, Agni Adhana, Agnihotram, Catur Masya etc.;
- 7 Soma Yajnas like Agnishtoma etc.; Different methods of fire piling (Agni Cayana)

The books are a must, for every Hindu, to be kept as a reference throughout one's life. (Just like we keep dictionary for our reference)

The books will be sent to you via book post, and informed via email after dispatch, with thanks for your interest in & support to, our Vedic tradition. You may donate for the books right on the website and write your address and email.

6) SOME SAY EVERYTHING IS DUE TO DESTINY. OTHERS SAY EVERYTHING CAN BE ACHIEVED BY EFFORT. PLEASE WRITE A FEW LINES ON THIS:

Hinduism, like material science, believes in cause and effect, action and reaction theories. So, the present effect is due to a past cause, and the present action will give birth to a future result. Rtam (Fixed or settled law) ensures that AS YOU SOW, SO YOU REAP, WITH INTEREST AND BONUS. To predict correctly, the result of an action, all the factors that affect, should be under perfect control, and constantly monitored as in a laboratory. Unfortunately, in practical life, this is not so. Even the doer of the action is not aware of all the links that connect the cause and effect over a long period of time. Also, some elements are under his control, while other elements are beyond his domination. He can apply his free will and best efforts, only in the field where he is the master. The effect of the rest of the elements, over which he has no power at all, is called Destiny, Karma, Fate, Divine will etc.

Mr. X wants to travel to Delhi from Bangalore by car, and hopes to reach on a certain date. He has to travel in the direction of north only, and he has no choice. Additionally, the following elements or factors, which modify his plans are also not under his command

- The type of traffic he is going to encounter at many places – the condition of roads, bridges enroute – weather conditions – man made interferences like riots, bandhs, dacoities – etc. He can reasonably surmise only, while planning. But ultimately divine will prevails.

On the other hand, the doer has more or less effective control over the following elements that affect his travel plans – condition of car – driving skill – keeping good health – stocking sufficient provisions, spares, money – studying routes, political conditions, weather condition reasonably existing at that time. He has full liberty to apply his free will in the above fields.

So, the result of the action of travel depends both on free will and destiny, the unknown or X factor making the result a probability, instead of a certainty.

So also, in agriculture, you plough efficiently, select superior quality seeds, sow at the right time when favourable monsoon is expected. You have the choice (free will) in the above. But the fall of rains at the correct time in the desired quantity (neither meagre nor excessive) is definitely not under your control. This X factor makes the result vary over a wide range from failure to success.

To sum up, the result of any action is determined by the combination of free will and fate. One can go on improving the efficiency of the free will portion only, so that failure on this account in the final result is minimised. He should have faith on the Rta principle that only good will come out of good actions, even though delayed, and no good effort becomes a waste. Thus destiny and free will complement each other towards progress in practical living.

The conception of destiny also contributes positively in another manner. You find yourself in a certain state now. You yourself are not aware of the cumulative past actions for the present position. You cannot re-do the past and modify the present, since action is possible only in the present. So, accept the present as destiny or fate. By this you cease to worry and regret about the past, and conserve your energy. You also know that the future is shaped by the present mostly. This also prevents anxieties about the future. Thus plugging the leakage of energy over the past and future, you start acting in the present with greater vigour. This vastly improves the success factor.