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**Willful Effort  
versus Karma Phala**

Anushāsana Parva  
Chapters 1,6

Swami Tadatmananda  
Arsha Bodha Center

युधिष्ठिर उवाच  
Yudhishtira said,  
yudhiṣṭhira uvāca

शराचितशरीरं हि

Your body, pierced with arrows  
śarācīta-śarīraṃ hi

तीव्रव्रणमुदीक्ष्य च ।

and badly wounded – seeing this  
tīvra-vraṇam udīkṣya ca

शमं नोपलभे वीर

I find no peace, O Bhishma,  
śamaṃ nopalabhe vīra

दुष्कृतान्येव चिन्तयन् ॥

thinking about these terrible deeds.  
duṣkr̥tāny eva cintayan (1.3)

अतः कष्टतरं किं नु

What could be more painful than that  
ataḥ kaṣṭataraṃ kiṃ nu

मत्कृते यत्पितामहः ।

for me, O Bhishma,  
mat-kṛte yat pitāmahaḥ

इमामवस्थां गमितः

than your condition caused by  
imām avasthāṃ gamitaḥ

प्रत्यमित्रै रणाजिरे ॥

enemies on the battlefield?  
pratyamitrai raṇājire (1.5)

अहं तव ह्यन्तकरः

I am indeed responsible for your death,  
aham̐ tava hy antakaraḥ

सुहृद्वधकरस्तथा |

I am the cause for the death of my dear friend.  
suhṛd-vadha-karas tathā

कृत्वेदं निन्दितं कर्म

Having done such a despicable deed,  
kṛtvedaṁ ninditaṁ karma

प्राप्स्यामः कां गतिं नृप ||

what consequences will I reap, O Bhisma?  
prāpsyāmaḥ kām̐ gatiṁ nr̥pa (1.7,6)

भीष्म उवाच

Bhishma said,  
bhīṣma uvāca

परतन्त्रं कथं हेतुम्

For matters beyond your control, why do you  
paratantraṁ kathaṁ hetum̐

आत्मानमनुपश्यसि |

see yourself as the cause?  
ātmānam anupaśyasi

कर्मण्यस्मिन्महाभाग

O Yudhishtira, with regard to your deeds,  
karmaṇy asmin mahābhāga

सूक्ष्मं ह्येतदतीन्द्रियम् ||

the cause is subtle, imperceptible.  
sūkṣmaṁ hyetad atīndriyam (1.8)

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

Yudhishtira said,  
yudhiṣṭhira uvāca

पितामह महाप्राज्ञ

O wise grandfather,  
pitāmaha mahāprājña

सर्वशास्त्रविशारद |

skilled in all the scriptures!  
sarva-śāstra-viśārada

दैवे पुरुषकारे च

Regarding karmic results and human effort,  
daive puruṣa-kāre ca

किंस्विच्छ्रेष्ठतरं भवेत् ||

which is more powerful?  
kiṁsvic chreṣṭhataraṁ bhavet (6.1)

भीष्म उवाच

Bhishma said,  
bhīṣma uvāca

अत्राप्युदाहरन्तीमम

Regarding that is an example  
atrāpy udāharantīmam

इतिहासं पुरातनम् |

in an old story about a  
itihāsaṁ purātanam

वसिष्ठस्य च संवादं

dialogue between Rishi Vasishtha  
vasiṣṭhasya ca saṁvādaṁ

ब्रह्मणश्च युधिष्ठिर ||

and Brahmaji, O Yudhishtira.  
brahmaṇas ca yudhiṣṭhira (6.2)

दैवमानुषयोः किंस्वित्

“Regarding karmic results and human effort,  
daiva-mānuṣayoḥ kiṁsvit

कर्मणोः श्रेष्ठमित्युत |

which is more powerful?” Thus,  
karmaṇoḥ śreṣṭham ityuta

पुरा वसिष्ठो भगवान्

long ago, revered Vasishtha  
purā vasiṣṭho bhagavān

पितामहमपृच्छत ||

asked Brahmaji this question.  
pitāmaham apṛcchata (6.3)

ब्रह्मोवाच

Brahmaji said,  
brahmovāca

नाबीजं जायते किञ्चिन्

Nothing arises without a cause.  
nābījaṃ jāyate kiñcin

न बीजेन विना फलम् ।

Without a cause, there is no result.  
na bījena vinā phalam

बीजाद्वीजं प्रभवति

From one cause, another arises.  
bījād bījaṃ prabhavati

बीजादेव फलं स्मृतम् ॥

From a cause, there is a result.  
bījād eva phalaṃ smṛtam (6.5)

यादृशं वपते बीजं

According to the seeds sown  
yādṛśaṃ vapate bījaṃ

क्षेत्रमासाद्य कर्षकः ।

in the ground, a farmer reaps (crops).  
kṣetram āsādya karṣakaḥ

सुकृते दुष्कृते वापि

So too, for prior good and bad deeds,  
sukṛte duṣkṛte vāpi

तादृशं लभते फलम् ॥

results are gained accordingly.  
tādṛśaṃ labhate phalam (6.6)

यथा बीजं विना क्षेत्रम्

Just as a seed, not planted in the ground,  
yathā bījaṃ vinā kṣetram

उप्तं भवति निष्फलम् ।

bears no fruit,  
uptaṃ bhavati niṣphalam

तथा पुरुषकारेण

so too, without human effort  
tathā puruṣa-kāreṇa

विना दैवं न सिध्यति ॥

the karmic results will not be fruitful.  
vinā daivaṃ na sidhyati (6.7)

क्षेत्रं पुरुषकारस्तु

The ground represents human effort,  
kṣetraṃ puruṣa-kāras tu

दैवं बीजमुदाहृतम् |

and the seed represents karmic results.  
daivaṃ bījam udāhṛtam

क्षेत्रबीजसमायोगात्

When the ground and seed are combined,  
kṣetra-bīja-samāyogāt

ततः सस्यं समृध्यते ||

then crops flourish.  
tataḥ sasyaṃ samṛdhyate (6.8)

तपसा रूपसौभाग्यं

With strenuous effort, beauty, fortune,  
tapasā rūpa-saubhāgyaṃ

रत्नानि विविधानि च |

and wealth of all kinds  
ratnāni vividhāni ca

प्राप्यते कर्मणा सर्वं

can be gained through deeds,  
prāpyate karmaṇā sarvaṃ

न दैवादकृतात्मना ||

not by a lazy person through karmic results.  
na daivād akṛtātmanā (6.12)

अर्थो वा मित्रवर्गो वा

Wealth, a group of friends,  
artho vā mitra-vargo vā

ऐश्वर्यं वा कुलान्वितम् |

power, progeny,  
aiśvaryaṃ vā kulānvitam

श्रीश्चापि दुर्लभा भोक्तुं

and blessings are difficult to get  
śrīś cāpi durlabhā bhoktum

तथैवाकृतकर्मभिः ||

for those who perform no deeds.  
tathaivakṛta-karmabhiḥ (6.15)

कृतः पुरुषकारस्तु

When human effort is made,  
kṛtaḥ puruṣa-kāras tu

दैवमेवानुवर्तते |

the results of past karma will follow.  
daivam evānuvartate

न दैवमकृते किञ्चित्

If no effort is made, not a bit of past karma  
na daivam akṛte kiñcit

कस्यचिद्दातुमर्हति ||

will be able to come for anyone.  
kasyacid dātum arhati (6.22)

पाण्डवानां हृतं राज्यं

The Pandava's kingdom was stolen  
pāṇḍavānām hṛtaṁ rājyaṁ

धार्तराष्ट्रैर्महाबलैः |

by the mighty sons of Dhritarashtra.  
dhārtarāṣṭrair mahābalaīḥ

पुनः प्रत्याहृतं चैव

Then, the kingdom was taken from them,  
punaḥ pratyāhṛtaṁ caiva

न दैवाद्भुजसंश्रयात् ||

not due to past karma, but due to force.  
na daivād bhuja-saṁśrayāt (6.40)

तपोनियमसंयुक्ता

Endowed with austerity and self-control  
tapo-niyama-saṁyuktā

मुनयः संशितव्रताः |

are those sages who observe their vows.  
munayaḥ saṁśitavratāḥ

किं ते दैवबलाच्छापम्

Is the power of their curses due to past karma  
kiṁ te daiva-balāc chāpam

उत्सृजन्ते न कर्मणा ||

and not due to their austerities?  
utsṛjante na karmaṇā (6.41)

यथाग्निः पवनोद्धृतः

Just as fire, fanned by the wind,  
yathāgniḥ pavanoddhṛtaḥ

सूक्ष्मोऽपि भवते महान् |

though small, grows big,  
sūkṣmo 'pi bhavate mahān

तथा कर्मसमायुक्तं

so too, when accompanied by deeds,  
tathā karma-samāyuktaṁ

दैवं साधु विवर्धते ||

one's past karmas turn out well.  
daivaṁ sādhu vivardhate (6.43)

यथा तैलक्षयादीपः

When its oil is exhausted, a lamp  
yathā taila-kṣayād dīpaḥ

प्रम्लानिमुपगच्छति |

becomes extinguished.  
pramlānim upagacchati

तथा कर्मक्षयाद्दैवं

So too, when deeds are exhausted, karmic results  
tathā karma-kṣayād daivaṁ

प्रम्लानिमुपगच्छति ||

become extinguished.  
pramlānim upagacchati (6.44)

अभ्युत्थानेन दैवस्य

Due to the fructification of past karma,  
abhyutthānena daivasya

समारब्धेन कर्मणा ।

due to those karmas responsible for one's birth.  
samārabdhena karmaṇā

विधिना कर्मणा चैव

and due to blessings of Ishvara,  
vidhinā karmaṇā caiva

स्वर्गमार्गमवाप्नुयात् ॥

one reaches the path to heaven.  
svarga-mārgam avāpnuyāt (6.49)