

to the mortal world (worldly bondage)—‘sarge’pi nopajāyante pralaye na vyathanti ca’ (Gītā 14/2).



Link:—The Lord in the next verse describes the attitude (vision) of God-realized souls.

विद्याविनयसम्पन्ने ब्राह्मणे गवि हस्तिनि ।

शुनि चैव श्वपाके च पण्डिताः समदर्शिनः ॥ १८ ॥

vidyāvinayasampanne brāhmaṇe gavi hastini
śuni caiva śvapāke ca paṇḍitāḥ samadarśinaḥ

Sages equate a learned and humble brāhmaṇa, a cow, an elephant or even a dog, or a lowly (outcaste), as these have a vision of God, in all of them. 18

Comment:—

'Vidyāvinayasampanne brāhmaṇe gavi hastini śuni caiva śvapāke ca paṇḍitāḥ samadarśinaḥ'—Here, two adjectives 'learned' and 'humble', have been used for Brāhmaṇa, in order to show his perfection, as generally a learned person is not humble, and he becomes proud of his learning.

Dealings of a sage with a learned brāhmaṇa, a pariah, a cow, an elephant and a dog would be different. Equal dealings are neither proper nor possible. The scriptures also support this view. A learned and humble brāhmaṇa, rather than a pariah is adored, milk is drunk of a cow, rather than of a bitch, while an elephant rather than a dog can be used for riding. When the Lord says, that sages see them with an equal eye, He means to say, that they behold the Lord, pervading everywhere. Therefore, they do not see with an unequal eye.

Here, a doubt may arise, how can their dealings be different, if they have an equal eye? The explanation is, that we see all the parts of our body (forehead, feet, hands and anus etc.,) with an equal eye and think of their welfare, yet our dealings with

these are different. When anyone is touched with our feet we feel sorry and beg his pardon, but we do not do so if he is touched with our arm. We show reverence for others, by bowing our head and folding hands, rather than feet. A hand has to be washed, if it touches anus, but it is not washed, if it touches a hand. Showing the forefinger and the thumb to someone, have different meanings, which are well-known to all. In this way, a man has different dealings with different parts of the body, but he loves them equally. He, is not indifferent to any afflicted limb. He, through the likeness of the self, sees equality everywhere, be it pleasure or pain (Gītā 6/32). In this way, the wise also have different dealings with different beings according to the difference in their food, qualities, conduct and caste etc., and it is proper also. They behold the Lord, pervading everywhere and so they love all beings and think of their welfare equally, without having any evil propensities, such as attachment, aversion, pride and partiality etc. They have an automatic inclination, to remove the sufferings of other beings and to console and comfort them, in the same way as a person tries to remove the pain of any limb of his body. So, it is said that they see everyone, with an equal eye. The Lord, has mentioned of this equality of vision or even-mindedness, several times in the Gītā as "He, who is equal-minded, excels" (6/9); "He sees the same, everywhere" (6/29); "He, through the likeness of the self, sees equality everywhere" (6/32); "Even-minded everywhere" (12/4); "He, who sees the supreme Lord abiding equally in all beings, never perishing when they perish, verily sees" (13/27); and "He sees the same Lord equally dwelling everywhere" (13/28).

Śrī Śaṅkarācārya declares:—

A man should be non-dual in feelings, rather than in dealings (Tattvopadeśa).

An Important Fact Pertaining to Equanimity

Now-a-days, people talk a lot, about equanimity. But it must

be understood in the right perspective.

Equanimity, is not child's play but an embodiment of God. The Lord declares, "Those, whose minds get rooted in equanimity, overcome the world (birth and death) and realize the Absolute (God)" (Gītā 5/19). This state of equanimity, is attained when others' pleasure and pain, become a striver's own pleasure and pain. The Lord declares, "O Arjuna, he who through the likeness of the self, sees equality (equanimity) everywhere, be it pleasure or pain, is considered a perfect Yogī" (Gītā 6/32).

A striver, attains equanimity when he is engaged in removing the suffering of others, in the same way, as he gets engaged promptly in removing his own suffering. Explaining the marks of a saint, Tulasīdāsa declares—

'Saints feel happy and sad in the happiness and sadness, of others' (Mānasa 7/38/1).

So long as, a man desires pleasure, he cannot attain equanimity, in spite of his best efforts. But, when he has a keen desire to provide comfort to others, to do good to them, and he thinks of their salvation, he becomes equanimous. A striver, should begin such activity, with his family. He should try his best to remove the suffering of his parents, wife, sons and other near and dear ones, even if he has himself to suffer. By doing so, he will attain peace. Similarly, he should try to remove the suffering of others. By doing so he will be thrilled with joy. We should serve, those to whom we are not attached or we should renounce our attachment for those, whom we serve—the result will be the same.

Saint Tulasīdāsa in the Mānasa declares, "Lakṣmaṇa serves Lord Rāma and Sītā with the same zeal, as that with which, an ignorant man serves his body" (2/142/1).

It is not wise to serve one's own body, because even an animal does so. A mother-monkey, loves its youngone so much, that it does not leave the youngone, even when the latter dies.

But, when someone gives it any eatable, it eats itself, without giving it to its youngone. Even if the youngone tries to eat, the mother scares the youngone away, as long as attachment is there, equanimity is out of the question.

We should serve others, in a disinterested manner. If anyone goes astray, we should guide him in a pleasant way to follow the right path. By doing so, we shall feel peace and happiness. If we do not guide him, we cannot experience peace. Let any one try this and see. Similarly, if we invite a thirsty person to have a drink of cold water, it gives us satisfaction, and peace of mind. This kind of happiness or peace leads us, to salvation while the desire to seek pleasure, leads us to degradation. In the same way, when religious discourses are arranged, we should politely request people to take comfortable seats, so that they may listen to the discourse properly, instead of commanding them, in an authoritative tone. By doing so, we shall derive satisfaction and peace. But, if we command them in an authoritative tone, it will reveal our pride which will prick others and we shall not be able to attain peace. By such behaviour, we can never attain equanimity.

Those, who are engrossed in the welfare of all beings attain the Lord (Gītā 12/4) because He is a disinterested friend, of all beings (Gītā 5/29). It is He, Who rears all beings, whether they are believers or non-believers. Water quenches the thirst, of both the staunch believer and non-believer, the sun, provides light to both, air helps everyone to breathe, and the earth provides room to everyone, without any distinction, whether they believe in God or not. Thus, everybody has an equal share in the things, created by God.

Equanimity or equality, does not mean that food should be eaten and marriages should be arranged without taking into consideration caste, creed or colour etc. Equality, in such dealings leads to degradation. It is, the god of death who has

equal dealings with all, because all the beings whether they are saints or householders, animals or gods, have to die.

Animals also have equality of dealings. A dog enters a brāhmaṇa's kitchen with unclean feet, in the same way as it enters the kitchen of a sweeper, because it does not distinguish between a brāhmaṇa and a sweeper. But the same behaviour on the part of a man cannot be ignored. Equanimity, consists in removing the suffering of others and in doing good to them. This equanimity, purifies him and his heart. But if one does not observe purity in food etc., his heart gets impure which leads to disquietude. Superficial equality, is against the ordinance of the scriptures and the decorum of society, and it causes conflict in society.

The scriptures do not support the view that the brāhmaṇas (priest class) are high by caste, while the śūdras (labour class) are low. The brāhmaṇas through preaching, the kṣatriyas (the warrior class) through protection (heroism), the vaiśyas (the trading class) through trade, and the śūdras (the labour class) through physical labour, should serve the members of all castes. But, it does not mean, that members of other castes should not do physical labour, while performing their duty. All of them should labour equally during the performance of their duty. Everyone should render service to others and co-operate with them with all the resources he possesses.

In the past, people followed the varṇa (caste) system and āśrama (order of life) system and led a happy and peaceful life. But today the Varṇāśrama system is being replaced by factions and groups. In villages people cannot even get water because the owners of the wells do not allow those people, who support the candidates of the rival parties, to draw water from their wells. Among the members of the same family also, there are feuds because they support different parties. How miserable is the condition!

If we want to attain equanimity, we should try to remove the sufferings of others whether they belong to our caste, order of life, religion or sect etc., or not, and should also do good to them. They may be, the devotees of Lord Rāma or Lord Kṛṣṇa or Lord Śiva or they may be muslims or christians etc., we should equally think of their welfare. We should never be partial to the people of our own caste or creed or group etc., nor should we feel happy and sad, when our own group or creed gain victory or suffer defeat over a rival group or creed etc. We should help them and satisfy their needs, to the best of our capacity and resources, without having feelings of envy, jealousy, hatred and pride etc., as upliftment is possible through righteous feelings, virtues and good conduct. Moreover, we should have the feelings that all beings should be happy, and free from disease and none should ever suffer, in the least. Having such feelings, we should do good to others—that is equanimity.

Appendix—A Brāhmaṇa, a pariah, a cow, an elephant and a dog—(the bodies of) all these are changing every moment and are going into non-existence but the reality ever abiding in them never changes, it ever remains the same. The wise perceive that reality only. As an ant extracts grains of sugar mixed with sand, in the same way the discerning eye of the wise perceives the real entity pervading the unreal world. It means that whether there is a Brāhmaṇa or a pariah, a cow or a dog, an elephant or an ant; in all these heterogeneous beings, the wise have an equal eye. In spite of inequality in their dealings, they have never an unequal eye.



Link:—In the next verse the Lord explains the glory of equanimity.

इहैव तैर्जितः सर्गो येषां साम्ये स्थितं मनः ।

निर्दोषं हि समं ब्रह्म तस्माद्ब्रह्मणि ते स्थिताः ॥ १९ ॥