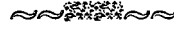


and to do what ought not to be done is also 'non-discharge of duty'. Duty is that in which a person having renounced his desire for pleasure, pleases others and which involves his own welfare as well as the welfare of others. By discharging one's duty, 'Yoga' (equanimity) is naturally attained. Without discharging one's duty a man can't attain equanimity (Gītā 6/3). Having attained equanimity, knowledge of Truth is naturally attained—which is the result of both—'Karmayoga' (the Discipline of Action) and 'Jñānayoga' (the Discipline of Knowledge).



नेहाभिक्रमनाशोऽस्ति प्रत्यवायो न विद्यते ।

स्वल्पमप्यस्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भयात् ॥ ४० ॥

nehābhikramanāśo'sti pratyavāyo na vidyate  
svalpamapyasya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt

In this path (of selfless action), there is neither loss of effort, nor any adverse result. Even a little practice of this discipline (dharma) protects one from great danger (of birth and death). 40

*Comment:—*

[Lord Kṛṣṇa has explained the importance of disinterested action in the latter part of the thirty-ninth and this fortieth verse in four ways:—(i) By it, one becomes free from shackles of actions. (ii) There is no loss in effort. (iii) There is no adverse result. (iv) Even a little practice of it (dharma) protects, one from great fear.]

'Nehābhikramanāśo'sti'—In this path of disinterested action, there is no loss of attempt viz., the partial practice of this Yoga (Discipline of Disinterested Action) has its corresponding benefit. The desire to attain equanimity is the beginning of equanimity. Such a beginning never gets wasted because desire for attaining the real is also real.

'Iha' (in this) means that in this world human beings are

authorized to attain equanimity. All other bodies (births) are to enjoy worldly pains and pleasures, there is no opportunity for them to do away with attachment and aversion because pleasures can be enjoyed only by having attachment and aversion. If there are no attachment and aversion, no pleasure can be enjoyed and such actions will lead to spiritual discipline.

**'Pratyavāyo na vidyate'**—Actions which are performed with a desire for fruits, can give adverse result, if there is any error in the pronunciation of incantations, or in performing sacrifice, etc. Suppose, a man performs sacrifice, for the birth of a son, but if it is not performed according to scriptures, it might result in the death, of a member of the family, instead of blessing him with a son. Sometime, if the result is not quite contrary, it may be less harmful, as the son may be born crippled. But, one who performs actions, without having any desire for fruits, becomes equanimous and so there is no adverse result from his effort.

What is adverse result? Unevenness of mind, is an adverse result. Attachment and aversion, is unevenmindedness. This uneven-mindedness leads to a cycle of birth and death. But, when a man becomes equanimous, attachment and aversion, are rooted out and on annihilation of attachment and aversion, there is no unevenness of mind, and therefore any adverse result, is out of the question.

**'Svalpamapyasya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt'**—Even a little practice, of this discipline of disinterested action, which brings about equanimity, protects one from the great fear of birth and death. So unlike action for fruits, which ends after its fruits, it does not perish viz., its fruit is not wealth or property, which are perishable. Equanimity, which a striver attains, by facing favourable and unfavourable circumstances, gets fixed in him and becomes permanent. A devotee (striver), deviating from the path of Yoga, having enjoyed heavenly pleasures for many years and having taken birth in the houses of righteous

persons, does not lose knowledge or even-mindedness gained, in his previous birth (Gītā 6/40—45) because this knowledge or even-mindedness, is real.

'Dharma' (Duty) is used in two senses—(i) Charity viz., kindness, in giving help (money, food, clothes etc.,) to the poor, and suffering people (ii) Discharging one's duty, according to the ordinance of scriptures. By performing one's duty, without desiring its fruit, one develops equanimity automatically, because it is axiomatic. Therefore, here, equanimity has been called 'Dharma' (duty).

### Something Noteworthy about Equanimity

Some people opine constant remembrance of God is not useful unless there is concentration of mind. But the gospel of the Gītā, does not attach much importance to this opinion, it attaches more importance to equanimity. According to the Gītā, a striver who has attained equanimity, is an exalted soul. Even when, a man is imbued with all qualities, if he does not gain equanimity, according to the Gītā, he cannot be called, a perfect soul.

This equanimity, is of two kinds—of the mind and of the self. The Lord, pervades everywhere equally. One who gets oneself established, in Him, gains victory over the world, and is liberated.

But this equanimity of self, can be known by equanimity of the mind (Gītā 5/19). Equanimity of the mind, consists in remaining even-minded, in success and failure (Gītā 2/48). Such a person, remains even-minded in praise and reproach, success and failure, profit and loss, pleasure and pain etc., (Gītā 5/20). This sort of equanimity, never perishes and it results in nothing, but salvation.

Whatever, virtuous actions, such as penance, charity and pilgrimage etc., are performed by a man, these perish after giving fruit, but equanimity, does not perish and it leads man to salvation or God-realization (Gītā 5/3), while concentration

of mind, may lead him to accomplishments (siddhis) but not to salvation.

**Appendix**—The Lord has mentioned the glory of equanimity in four ways in the thirty-ninth and fortieth verses—

(i) ‘*karmabandhaṁ prahāsyasi*’—By equanimity a man shakes off the shackles of Karma (action).

(ii) ‘*nehābhikramaṇāśo’si*’—There is no loss of effort.

(iii) ‘*pratyavāyo na vidyate*’—There is no adverse result of this effort.

(iv) ‘*svalpamapyasya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt*’—Even a little practice of this discipline (dharma) protects one from the great danger of birth and death.

Though in the first point the three remaining points are included, yet there is a little difference in them; as—

(i) The Lord first in the normal way declares that by equanimity a man shakes off the shackles of Karma (action). The reason of bondage is the attachment to the modes viz., it is his assumed affinity with Prakṛti (Matter) and its evolutes (Gītā 13/21). In equanimity there is no affinity with Prakṛti and its evolutes; therefore the man is freed from the shackles (bondage) of action. As in the world many virtuous and sinful actions are done, but those actions don’t bind us because we have no relationship with them, similarly the even-minded person has no relationship with the actions done by his body.

(ii) If equanimity merely begins viz., there is an aim of attaining equanimity, there is inquisitiveness to attain it, then this beginning is not destroyed. The reason is that the aim to attain the imperishable is also imperishable while the aim to gain the perishable, is also perishable. The aim to gain the perishable leads to destruction (fall) while the aim to attain equanimity leads to salvation—‘*jijñāsurapi yogasya śabdabrahmātivartate*’ (Gītā 6/44).

(iii) There is no adverse result of this equanimity. If there

is any error in pronouncing the sacred text in the performance of actions which are done with a desire for fruits, the result of those actions can be adverse.\* But if there is equanimity in life, and an error is committed, and if there is slip in carefulness, the action does not give adverse result (bondage). For example if a paid servant while lighting a lantern in the dark drops it and breaks it, we are angry with him. But if our friend who never wants anything from us, drops the lantern and it is broken, we don't get angry but ask him not to mind it as it matters little. Therefore he who performs actions with the desire for fruit, may have adverse result of his actions but how can the result of the actions of the person, who doesn't covet any fruit, be adverse? It can't be.

(iv) Even a little equanimity protects one from the great danger of birth and death viz., it results in salvation. As actions done with an interested motive perish after bearing fruit, in that way even a little equanimity does not perish after bearing fruit but it only leads to salvation. If virtuous actions such as religious sacrifice, charity and penance etc., are performed with a desire for fruit, their result is perishable (gain of money, wealth and heaven

\* There is a mythological story that Tvaṣṭā performed a religious sacrifice in order to get a son who would kill Indra. In that sacrifice the sages performed the sacrifice with the sacred text 'indraśatruṃ vivardhasva'. In the word 'indraśatru' if there is 'śaṣṭhītatpuruṣa' compound-word, it means 'Indra's enemy' and if there is 'bahuvrīhi' compound-word, it means 'he whose enemy is Indra.' By the difference of 'samāsa' (compound-word), there is difference in sound. Therefore in 'śaṣṭhītatpuruṣa' compound word, the word 'indraśatru's' last letter 'tru' will be pronounced with 'udātta' sound while in 'bahuvrīhi' compound-word, the word 'indraśatru's' first letter 'i' will be pronounced with 'udātta' sound. The aim of the sages was to do the 'antyodātta' pronunciation of the word 'indraśatru' but they did 'ādyodātta' pronunciation. So because of the difference in sound in the pronunciation of the sacred text there was adverse result and thus Indra became the killer of Vṛtṛasura, Tvaṣṭā's son. Therefore it is said:

mantra hīnaḥ svarato varṇato vā mithyāprayukto na tamarthamāha  
sa vāgvajro yajamānaḥ hinasti yathendraśatruḥ svarato'parādhāt

(Pāṇinīya Śikṣā)

etc.,) and if they are performed without the desire for fruit, their result is imperishable (salvation). Thus virtuous actions such as sacrifice, charity and penance etc., can bear two types of fruit but the fruit of equanimity is only salvation. As a traveller, while travelling stops on the way or sleeps, he has not to go back to the place from where he started his journey but he has covered the distance upto the place where he stops or sleeps. Similarly as much equanimity is attained in life, that never perishes.

‘*śvalpamapyasya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt*’—Even a little feeling of disinterest is true while fear even being great is untrue. As for a bundle of cotton, a lot of fire is not required, the cotton may be one bundle or a hundred bundles, a match stick is enough to burn it. When one match stick is applied to the cotton, the cotton itself becomes fire and helps in burning the remaining cotton. In the same way detachment is fire and the world is cotton. Being detached from the world, the world itself perishes because the world in fact has no existence at the root, so one can’t be attached to it.

The least renunciation is real and the biggest action is unreal. An action ends while renunciation is endless. Therefore actions such as sacrifice, charity and penance etc., perish after giving fruit (Gītā 8/28) but renunciation (renunciation of the fruit of action) never perishes—‘*tyāgācchāntiranantaram*’ (Gītā 12/12). By renouncing the egoistic notion only, infinite universes are renounced because this sense of ego has sustained the entire universe (Gītā 7/5).

There may be a big heap of grass, can it face fire? It may be very dark, can it face light? If there is a fight between darkness and light, will darkness win? Similarly if there is a fight between ignorance and knowledge, will ignorance win? Can the greatest fear face fearlessness? Equanimity even if it is a little is complete and fear even if great is incomplete. A little equanimity is great because it is true and the great fear is little (without existence) because it is untrue.

What is the import of calling equanimity or the feeling of disinterestedness 'a little.' The feeling of disinterestedness is great, but we understand and experience it a little, so it has been called a little. In fact our understanding is a little, equanimity is not a little. Our view has not grasped it fully, so there is defect in our view, not in equanimity. Similarly we have valued the unreal more, it does not mean that the unreal is great but value accorded by us is great. Therefore if we value the real more, the real will become great viz., its value will be realized and if we don't value the unreal, the unreal will become a little. In fact the unreal may be great or a little; it has no existence 'nāsato vidyate bhāvaḥ' and the real may be great or a little, its existence is ever present—'nā bhāvo vidyate sataḥ'. Therefore in Upaniṣads the Supreme Soul has been called smaller than a molecule and the biggest of all—'aṇoraṇīyān mahato mahīyān' (Kātha. 1/2/20, Śvetāśvatara 3/20).



*Link:—In the next verse Lord Kṛṣṇa explains to Arjuna, how to attain equanimity.*

व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिरेकेह कुरुनन्दन ।

बहुशाखा ह्यनन्ताश्च बुद्धयोऽव्यवसायिनाम् ॥ ४१ ॥

vyavasāyātmikā buddhirekeha kurunandana  
bahuśākhā hyanantāśca buddhayo'vyavasāyinām

O Joy of the Kurus, in this blessed path, the intellect is determinate and concentrated, whereas the intellect of the undecided (infirm), is scattered in many directions, and is endlessly diverse. 41

*Comment:—*

'Vyavasāyātmikā buddhirekeha kurunandana'—To a seeker of God-realization, the intellect is determinate and single-pointed viz., he has only one decision and that is to attain equanimity,