

is concerned, everyone is equally deserving, to attain it, while it is not possible, for everyone to have worldly possessions in equal share.

Appendix—In the world ‘performance of action’ and ‘non-performance of action’ are related expressions. Therefore ‘I have to do nothing’—this is also an action. But in Godhood ‘inaction is natural and automatic. The reason is that the divine entity has nothing to do with action or inaction. Therefore a God-realized Karmayogī has neither any relation with a thing, nor with a person nor with an action—‘yo’vatiṣṭhati neṅgate’ (Gītā 14/23). From his view-point nothing exists except the divinity.



Link:—The Lord in the next verse explains, what a striver should do in order to attain the state of a God-realized soul, described in the preceding verse.

तस्मादसक्तः सततं कार्यं कर्म समाचर।
असक्तो ह्याचरन्कर्म परमाप्नोति पूरुषः ॥ १९ ॥

tasmādasaktaḥ satataṁ kāryaṁ karma samācara
asakto hyācarankarma paramāpnoti pūruṣaḥ

Therefore, perform duty efficiently without attachment, for by actions without attachment, man attains the Supreme. 19

Comment:—

'Tasmādasaktaḥ satataṁ kāryaṁ karma samācara'—The term 'Tasmāt' (therefore) has been used to connect the preceding verse with this verse. In the preceding verse, the Lord declared that actions are performed by a God-realized soul, for the welfare of others though there is no need for him to perform these. Therefore, the Lord uses the term 'tasmāt', to make Arjuna to realize God, by performing his duty without expecting any reward. The reason is, that the self has no interest in what is done or what is not done. Actions are ever performed for others,

not for the self. When a striver performs actions for others, his attachment to perform actions disappears, and he gets established in the self. He is attached to them, when he thinks "I am body", "The body is mine" and regards the perishable objects such as body etc., as significant.

It is attachment, not action, which leads to one's downfall. Being attached to the body, senses, mind, intellect and other mundane objects etc., a man performs actions, in order to derive pleasure out of them. This attachment for the materialistic objects etc., leads him to the cycle of birth and death. The Lord declares, "Attachment to the modes born of nature, is the cause of the birth of soul in good and evil wombs" (Gītā 13/21). When a striver performs actions without attachment, his affinity for the insentient (matter) is renounced.

All actions of a striver who performs them, being free from attachment, are automatically for the welfare of all creatures, while the person who is attached to mundane objects and actions etc., cannot do good to others.

So far, we have used mundane materials such as a body etc., for our own pleasure and prosperity. Therefore, we are indebted to the world. We can repay our debt by performing our duty for the welfare of the world. When we perform action for ourselves, instead of being free from debt, we run into debt, more and more. Therefore, we have to take birth in the world again and again, in order to free ourselves of debt. By performing actions for the welfare of others, we get out of the old debt and we cease to run into new debt, as we perform actions in a disinterested way. Thus, we are liberated from bondage.

An action cannot be performed constantly, but attachment remains constant. So the Lord by the expression "Satataṁ asaktaḥ" urges Arjuna, to be constantly free from attachment. A striver, should perform his duty, prescribed by the scriptures constantly without attachment. In fact attachment also does not remain

constant. Even when the world itself is not constant, it is ever-changing how can its attachment remain constant? In spite of that, in the assumed ego, attachment seems to be there, constantly.

'Kāryam' viz., duty is that, which can be done and must be done. In other words, duty is action, which must be performed for the welfare of others, according to the ordinance of the scriptures and according to one's capacity, by renouncing one's selfish motive. In this way, duty is linked to the welfare of others.

Everyone has the freedom and capability to perform one's duty. It can be performed very easily. But it is because of heedlessness, indolence and desire for fruit, that its performance seems difficult. A man can perform his duty, independently under all circumstances. Attachment perishes through the performance of duty, while it enhances through the non-performance of duty. By performing duty for the welfare of others, we get rid of our present attachment and by not expecting any reward from them get rid of future attachment.

The term 'samācara' means, that the duty must be performed very carefully, enthusiastically, promptly and duly, so that the aim may be attained. If there is the least dereliction of duty, it creates a great hurdle in the path, of a Karmayogī. A man's duty according to his caste, order of life, nature and circumstances prescribed by the scriptures is 'sahaja karma' (innate duty). One should not give up one's innate duty, even though it may have flaws (Gītā 18/48), because by doing so, one does not incur sin (Gītā 18/47). So, the Lord seems to urge Arjuna, to perform his innate duty of waging war, because he is a Kṣatriya (a member of the warrior class), even though the act may seem terrible to him. An innate duty must be performed without attachment, as it leads to equanimity.

Something Noteworthy

When a being is born as a human being, he is provided

with all the matter, such as body, riches, property etc., and he has to leave behind all the materials here, when he departs. It proves that he has been granted this material in the same way, as a clerk is provided with the material in the office, so that he may work with it. But it does not mean, that it is his. As a clerk is paid for doing the office work, similarly a striver who performs actions for the world, his affinity for the world is renounced and he realizes his identity (unity) with God. This unity with God, is his reward.

This world is the field for practising spiritual discipline. Whatever material has been provided to us here, is only for practising spiritual practices, rather than for pleasure and prosperity. It is, neither ours nor for us. If and when, we gain our own objectives viz., the Supreme Bliss (God-realization), (Self-realization) nothing remains to be gained after that i.e., there remains no desire for anything else (Gītā 6/22). But we may acquire innumerable worldly things, the desire to acquire more, is never satisfied, it rather enhances.

When by error, a person accepts a thing as his own and for him he is attached to it. The Discipline of Action is an easy and good method, to wipe out this error. A Karmayogī, who without assuming a thing as his own and for him, uses it in order to render service to others, is easily liberated from the worldly bondage, as he performs actions for the world, by renouncing attachment, a feeling of 'mine' and desire etc., for the same. Thus the flow of his actions, is towards the world and he is liberated. On the other hand, a common person who performs actions with attachment, with feelings of 'mine' and desire etc., the flow of actions is towards him and so he is tied to these.

'Asakto hyācarankarma'—It is a man, who establishes a link with the world, and not the world with him. A striver should perform actions for the welfare of the world without attachment, having no desire for their fruit. His present affinity for the things

and persons of the world is renounced, by rendering service to them, and with things and persons of the future by having no desire for these.

In a fair, volunteers render service to the public, without expecting any reward. So they sleep soundly without even remembering any person of the public. Similarly, a striver who serves others without expecting any return not ever honour and praise etc., does not remember them and is thus easily liberated from the worldly bondage.

In the Discipline of Action, actions are performed for the welfare of others, without any attachment. Attachment can be wiped out, only when actions are performed according to the scriptural injunctions (Mānasa 3/16/1). Attachment can never be wiped out by performing forbidden actions.

'Paramāpnoti pūruṣaḥ'—As in the thirty-fourth verse of the thirteenth chapter the Lord has mentioned attainment to the Supreme by the term 'param' (the supreme) for a Sāṅkhyayogī (follower of the Discipline of Knowledge), similarly, it has been mentioned here by the same term for a Karmayogī, (follower of the Discipline of Action). It means that a striver according to his taste, inclination and faith, attains God-realization, by anyone of the Disciplines of Action, Knowledge or Devotion (Gītā 5/4-5). God is, He Who pervades everywhere, everytime, Who is everyone's and is attainable to everyone, undoubtedly and automatically.

Question:—How can the pride of doership which is an obstacle to God-realization, be wiped out?

Answer:—Common people perform actions for themselves, thinking that they are the doers. But a Karmayogī thinks that whatever he has acquired from the world, is not his, but it is of the world. Therefore, with the body, senses, mind, intellect, money and material etc., which he has acquired from the world, he renders service to the world. Thus his pride of doership perishes.

A Karmayogī, does not perform actions, in order to enjoy their fruits. He regards, the body as a fragment of the world. Therefore, there is nothing special to be proud of, if the body renders service to the world, in the same way, as a hand is not proud of rendering a great service to the face, by washing it.

A man performs actions in order to achieve a goal. As soon as the action is over, he gets engrossed, in that goal. As a businessman starts business in order to earn money, but as soon as his transaction is over, he starts counting the money without even thinking of customers etc., who had come to buy articles from his shop. A worldly man, having a mundane aim, remains engrossed in the world but he cannot be identified with the world, in spite of doing so, because the world is kaleidoscopic and insentient, while the self is uniform and sentient. But the striver who performs actions having God-realization as his aim gets identified with God, (whether he realizes this fact or not), because both of these are uniform and sentient. In this state of identification, no question can arise regarding the pride of doership.

Actions have a beginning and an end. So a person who performs an action, also ceases to be a doer, as soon as the action ends. But being under an illusion, he regards himself as a doer, even when he does not perform any action. Thus by considering himself as a doer constantly, his pride of doership, instead of perishing, enhances. An orator, considers himself an orator even when he does not make a speech. He regards himself superior to the audience and wants the people to honour and serve him and to fulfil his necessities. But if he regards himself as an orator only, during the period of a speech and not afterwards, he will expect no reward from the audience, and thus his doership will merge in his aim.

As an eater regards himself as an eater, only when he eats food, a Karmayogī also regards himself as a doer, only when he performs actions and not at other times. Suppose a Karmayogī,

delivers discourses and he has won high fame; in spite of that, if an occasion arises to hear a discourse, he can easily listen to it, without expecting any honour, respect and status, as now he considers himself a listener, not a speaker, without any superiority complex. He becomes a hearer or a speaker, according to the need of the moment. Thus his pride of doership does not remain constant. A thing which changes actually, does not exist. So how can a relationship with it remain constant? By thinking so, a striver comes to realize his egolessness.

An actor in a drama plays the role of Hariścandra, but while playings that role, he does not regard himself as a real Hariścandra. Similarly, a Karmayogī, while performing all actions according to the scriptural injunctions, does not regard himself, as a doer. He, like an actor, serves the world with the worldly things, without regarding these as his or for himself. Thus he has no pride of doership, in the least.

Similarly, he accepts his affinity for his kith and kin, while serving them, only in order to serve them. He performs his duty to the best of his capacity and resources, towards his wife, children and other members, even though they are ugly, hard-hearted and quarrelsome. Moreover, he thinks that his wife or children are not only his, but also of others. For example, his wife is her children's mother, her father's daughter, her brother's sister and so on. Thus, they have also a claim on her. Similar, is the case with other relatives such as father, sons and brothers etc. So a striver performs his duty efficiently, like an actor without thinking of the duty of others. By having the pride of doership, a man thinks of the duty of others and by thinking so, he deviates from a duty, while a Karmayogī does not accept his constant affinity for his caste, order of life, sect and circumstances etc., and so he performs his duty efficiently. A thing which is not constantly in existence, is for that matter, not in existence at all. Thus, the sense of doership of a Karmayogī automatically perishes.

A Vital Fact

A man has his identity with God, if he has no sense of doership unless he ignores the reality. As a swing while moving, stops still for a fraction of a second, at the rope end, in the same way, there is always the state of actionlessness (equanimity) after a swinging action ends and the second one begins. Secondly, if we perceive in the right perspective, we come to know that as the rope of the swing when it moves, remains straight, a man also remains in a state of equanimity, even while working. If he wants to realize this fact, he can do so, as soon as an action is over. In case a striver is ever careful, in this respect, he can realize equanimity or his identity with God, where there is no sense of doership.

In order to wipe out the pride of doership, a striver should distinguish the real which really exists, from the unreal (illusion) which seems to exist. The world which is changing always is illusory while the all-pervading Lord is real and He is automatically attainable to everyone—from Brahmā, the creator, to even an ant, equally.

The world which seems to exist, is every second getting destroyed. The senses, mind and intellect etc., with which the world is seen, reflect nothing but illusion. The all-pervading Lord Who ever exists, is always attainable to us. Therefore, in the Gītā it has been declared, "The unreal has no existence and the real never ceases to be" (2/16).

All the worldly objects and actions are nothing but an illusion. Actionlessness, exists at the beginning and the end, of every action. And this is a rule, that whatever is at the beginning and the end also remains in the middle. Therefore, actionlessness automatically exists, even when an action is going on. That actionless essence viz., the Sentient or God is the illuminator, of both actions and actionlessness and He, transcends the two.

It is because of our attachment (affinity) to the illusion (objects,

actions and persons etc.,) that we cannot realize God. As soon as attachment is renounced, ever attainable God is realized. Therefore, when being free from attachment, we apply this illusion (body and objects etc.,) in the service of the illusory (world), the flow of this illusion (body and objects etc.,) is towards the world and God the divine essence that is ever attainable, remains.



Link:—Has there been any person who attained perfection (God-realization) through the performance of action, without attachment? The Lord answers the question in the next verse.

कर्मणैव हि संसिद्धिमास्थिता जनकादयः ।

लोकसङ्ग्रहमेवापि सम्पश्यन्कर्तुमर्हसि ॥ २० ॥

**karmaṇaiva hi samsiddhimāsthitā janakādayaḥ
lokasaṅgrahamevāpi sampaśyankartumarhasi**

It was by action alone, that Janaka and others attained perfection. Thou should perform selfless action, also for the good of the world. 20

Comment:—

'Karmaṇaiva hi samsiddhimāsthitā janakādayaḥ'—The term 'ādi' stands for, 'beginning' as well as, 'like'. Here the former meaning does not apply because before Janaka, there had been great souls like Vivasvān, Vaivasvata Manu and king Ikṣvāku, who had attained perfection through the performance of action (Gītā 4/1-2). Therefore, here it is used in the latter sense which means that some great souls like Janaka, before and after him, leading householder's life attained salvation by action.

This Discipline of Action is very old. By this discipline, Janaka and several other great souls have attained salvation or God-realization. Therefore, if anyone at present or in future, wants to realize God through the path of action, he without regarding the body and the objects as his own, should apply these in the