

‘For the protection and establishment of righteousness, I manifesting Myself in several Form and guise, behave (act) accordingly.’



यदि ह्यहं न वर्तेयं जातु कर्मण्यतन्द्रितः ।
मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥ २३ ॥
उत्सीदेयुरिमे लोका न कुर्यां कर्म चेदहम् ।
सङ्करस्य च कर्ता स्यामुपहन्यामिमाः प्रजाः ॥ २४ ॥

yadi hyaham na varteyam jātu karmanyatandritaḥ
mama vartmānuvartante manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ
utsīdeyurime lokā na kuryāṁ karma cedaham
saṅkarasya ca kartā syāmupahanyāmimāḥ prajāḥ

For, if I did not engage Myself in action without care, men would in everyway follow My path, O Arjuna. If I did not perform action, these worlds would perish and I would prove to be the creator of confusion and for the destruction of these people. 23-24

Comment:—

[In the twenty-second verse, the Lord by a positive inference, laid emphasis on the performance of duty. In this verse, He by the negative inference, mentions the harm that would be done if He did not perform duty.]

'Yadi hyaham na varteyam jātu karmanyatandritaḥ'—The term 'Hi' has been used here to support the expression "I engage Myself in action", used in the preceding verse.

The Lord declares that it is impossible for Him, not to perform action. But if it is so assumed that He does not perform action—in this sense the expression 'Yadi jātu' (If ever) has been used.

The term 'atandritaḥ' means, that actions should be performed, very carefully and promptly, renouncing indolence and heedlessness. By doing so, affinity for actions is renounced.

As a stiff twig is easily broken but an elastic one cannot be easily broken. Similarly, affinity for actions is renounced, if these are performed, carefully and promptly, but these are not renounced if performed, indolently and heedlessly. Therefore, the Lord (in the nineteenth verse) has used the term 'Samācara' (Perform well) and here the term 'atandritaḥ' (unwearied), has been used.

If there is recollection of an action, time and again, it means, that there has been some fault (desire, attachment, incompleteness, indolence, heedlessness, indifference etc.,) in the performance of that action and so affinity for it, has not been renounced.

'Mama vartmānuvartante manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ'—By this expression, the Lord seems to declare that those who follow His path really deserve to be called human beings, while those who while away time because of indolence and heedlessness, and demand their rights, do not deserve to be called human beings even though in human-garb.

In the twenty-first verse of this chapter, the Lord declared, "Whatever a great man does, the same is done by others as well; and whatever standard he sets, is followed by others," while here, He declares, "Men in everyway follow My path". It means that a great man is a model for the human world only, while the Lord is a model for the three worlds.

The Lord incarnates in the world, to set an example to other people. He who does not live for himself, and knows the art of living, in the world. The world is an educational institution, where we have to learn how to do good to others, by renouncing desire, attachment and selfishness etc. Through this lesson, we have to attain salvation. The only aim of human life, is to perform our duty by serving others and doing good to them, including members of the own family and try to lead one another, to salvation.

'Utsīdeyurime lokā na kuryām karma cedaham'—The Lord (in the twenty-third verse) explained the harm if He performed action

unweariedly and now (in the twenty-fourth verse) He explains the harm that could be done if he did not perform action.

"Though, it is not possible for the Lord not to perform action, yet if it is so assumed"—in this sense the Lord has used the term 'Cet' (If)—this expression means, that a man should not be attached to inaction (Gītā 2/47). Therefore, the Lord by citing His own example says, that He performs action even though there is nothing unattained, which remains to be attained by Him. And if He did not perform action (according to the caste and order of life in which He has incarnated), He would be the creator of confusion of castes and cause destruction of the people. It is so, because by renouncing their duty, men will also get steeped in the mode of ignorance (Gītā 14/18).

The Lord is a model for the three worlds and all beings follow Him. Therefore, if the Lord does not perform His duty, no one in the three worlds, will perform his duty and thus they will suffer a downfall.

'*Saṅkarasya ca kartā syāmupahanyāmimāḥ prajāḥ*'—If the Lord did not perform action (duty), these worlds would perish and He would be the root cause of their destruction, but this is not at all possible.

The term 'saṅkara' stands for the mixture of two castes. Arjuna (in the fortieth and the forty-first verses of the first chapter) said, "If I fight the family will be ruined. With the ruin of the family, the immemorial religious rites of the family will be destroyed. With the destruction of the religious rites, impiety will overcome the whole family. By the prevalence of impiety, the women of the family will become immoral. With the corruption of women, mixing of castes (intermingling of castes) will result." Thus, Arjuna meant to say, that war would lead to the mixing of castes.* But the Lord contradicts Arjuna's

* Even according to the argument of Arjuna, non-performance of duty (action) is the cause of confusion of castes. Confusion of castes arises only when

statement, by citing His own example when He declares that confusion of castes, would arise by the non-performance of duty. Therefore, here Lord Kṛṣṇa seems to urge Arjuna to wage the war, otherwise he would be the creator of mixed castes.

An Important Fact

The Lord, answers Arjuna's question, "Why do You urge me to engage in this terrible action?" In the twenty-second, the twenty-third and the twenty-fourth verses, by citing His own example that He engages Himself in action even though He has nothing to do personally with it and nothing to attain in the three worlds. Therefore, He urges him to be engaged in action.

The Lord gives Arjuna a hint, that He had agreed to be his chariot-driver and he as His chariot-warrior is performing His duty very carefully and efficiently, so that other people may follow His example as He stands as a model for them. So he should also perform his duty as a Kṣatriya (member of the warrior class) carefully and efficiently.



Link:— Having described the need for the performance of duty, by Him, the Lord in the next two verses, urges a man of knowledge to perform action, carefully.

सक्ताः कर्मण्यविद्वांसो यथा कुर्वन्ति भारत ।
 कुर्याद्विद्वांस्तथासक्तश्चिकीर्षुर्लोकसङ्ग्रहम् ॥ २५ ॥
 न बुद्धिभेदं जनयेदज्ञानां कर्मसङ्गिनाम् ।
 जोषयेत्सर्वकर्माणि विद्वान्युक्तः समाचरन् ॥ २६ ॥

women are corrupted and they become so by non-performance of their duty. If women believe that they should perform their duty by remaining chaste, in the same way as their husbands performed their duty by sacrificing their lives, they cannot neglect their duty. Thus by performing their duty, they will maintain their chastity and there will be no mixing of castes.