

by him, without having any attachment or aversion for them. A real renouncer, is he who has totally renounced attachment and aversion for them.

It is not actions, but attachment and aversion, which bind a man. As a perfect devotee, is free from attachment and aversion, he is said to have renounced good and evil deeds.

It may also mean, he is a renouncer of the fruit of good and evil, actions. But this idea has already been expressed in the first half of this verse, when the Lord declares, "He neither rejoices nor hates, neither grieves nor desires." If this meaning is taken, then there is a repetition, of the same idea. Therefore, here it should mean, renouncement of attachment and aversion for good and evil actions.

'Bhaktimānyaḥ sa me priyaḥ'—A devotee loves God, very much and so he naturally thinks of Him, remembers Him and adores Him. Such a devotee has been called a 'Bhaktimān' (full of devotion).

A devotee, has an exclusive devotion for God, therefore he is loved by Him.

Appendix—Joy (hr̥ṣyati) and grief (śocati), attachment (kāṅkṣati) and aversion (dveṣṭi)—these are dualities (pairs of opposites). A devotee remains free from these dualities. In 'Nāraḍa bhaktisūtra' it is mentioned—'yatprāpya na kiñcidvāñchati na śocati na dveṣṭi na ramate notsāhī bhavati' (5).

'Having attained devotion, a devotee neither desires anything nor grieves nor hates nor is attached to anything and having obtained a thing, he is not encouraged (rejoiced).'



Link:—In the fifth and last group, which consists of the next two verses, the Lord mentions ten marks, of a perfect devotee.

समः शत्रौ च मित्रे च तथा मानापमानयोः ।

शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु समः सङ्गविवर्जितः ॥ १८ ॥

तुल्यनिन्दास्तुतिर्मौनी सन्तुष्टो येन केनचित् ।

अनिकेतः स्थिरमतिर्भक्तिमान्मे प्रियो नरः ॥ १९ ॥

samaḥ śatrau ca mitre ca tathā mātāpamānayoḥ
 śītoṣṇasukhaduḥkheṣu samaḥ saṅgavivarjitaḥ
 tulyanindāstutirmauni santuṣṭo yena kenacit
 aniketaḥ sthīramatirbhaktimānme priyo naraḥ

He who is, alike to foe and friend, in honour and dishonour, also who is alike, in cold and heat, (favourable and unfavourable circumstances, in pleasure and pain, who is free from attachment, who holds blame and praise equally, who is thoughtful, contented with any means of subsistence, who has no attachment to his body and his abode and is firm in mind, that man full of devotion, is dear to Me. 18-19

Comment:—

'Samaḥ śatrau ca mitre ca'—Being free from attachment and aversion, a perfect devotee, is even-minded, towards foe and friend, equally. Not to talk of common men, even strivers, are swayed by feelings of enmity and friendship, towards an enlightened devotee. But, he ever remains even-minded, to foe and friend.

If there is a quarrel between two persons, over division of property, one of them has a feeling of enmity, towards a devotee, while the second person has a feeling of friendship, for him. In sitting over judgment, a devotee, will allow a little more, to the former and a bit less, to the latter. It seems, that the judgment of the devotee is not just, but the former will feel, that the judgment is right. Such a judgment, will create a feeling of equanimity, even in the person who regards the devotee, as his enemy.

An enlightened devotee, is alike to foe and friend. It means, that people regard him, as a foe or a friend. So he has in reality not been without foe and friend, but he has been called to be alike, to both of them.

'Tathā mānāpamānayoh'—A man, feels honoured or dishonoured, when he identifies the self with body. A devotee, has neither egoistic feelings, with his body nor a sense of mine. So, if his body is honoured or dishonoured, his mind, does not undergo any modification (happiness or sadness). He always remains established, in equanimity.

'Śītoṣṇasukhaduḥkheṣu samaḥ'—An enlightened devotee's equanimity, has been described here, in the two pairs of opposites—

(1) He is equanimous in cold and heat i.e., there is no modification in his mind, even when there is contact of the senses, with sense-objects.

(2) He has equanimity, in pleasure and pain, i.e., his mind remains the same in gain and loss, of riches and materials etc.

'Śītoṣṇa', stands for cold and heat i.e., a sense of touch only, but here it stands for all other senses also. When senses, are in contact with their sense-objects, a perfect devotee, knows of favourable and unfavourable circumstances, but he remains equanimous, while a common man feels happy or sad, and has an attachment and aversion for those circumstances.

In the Gītā, 'to remain even in pleasure and pain' and 'to be devoid of pleasure and pain' both, are used in the same sense. The favourable (happy) and unfavourable (sad) circumstances, are inevitable. So, it is not possible to be devoid of them, but an enlightened devotee, remains the same (even) without feeling, either happy or sad. One can be devoid of pleasure and pain, which arise from favourable and unfavourable circumstances. In the Gītā, where there is mention of being even in pleasure and pain, it means, that one is equable, in favourable and unfavourable circumstances. And, where there is mention of absence of pleasure and pain, it means pleasure and pain, arising from these circumstances.

'Saṅgavivarjitah'—The term 'Saṅga', means, both affinity

(union) and attachment. It is not possible for a person, to be disunited physically, from the body, mind, senses and intellect, so long as, he remains alive. He can physically renounce, objects other than the body. But real renouncement, consists in renouncing attachment for objects and beings, rather than their physical renouncement. Had physical renouncement, led a person to salvation, every person after death, would have attained salvation, as he abandons even his body. If he is attached to beings and objects etc., even after death, he is in bondage, because it is attachment, rather than physical renouncement, which leads to bondage.

Physical renouncement, can also be a means, to renounce attachment, but attachment, should be renounced from the heart. If there is the least attachment to the world, a person, will certainly think of it. Then attachment, will give birth to desire, anger and delusion respectively, and may lead him to ruin (Gītā 2/62-63).

The Lord, in the fifty-ninth verse of the second chapter, by using the expression 'Param dr̥stvā nivartate', declared, "Even the taste for the objects of sense, turns away when the Supreme is seen." It means that attachment is totally renounced, after God-realization. But, it does not mean that attachment, cannot be totally renounced, during spiritual practice. When the soul of a striver, is no longer attached to external contacts (objects), even during spiritual practice, he immediately attains undying bliss or God-realization (Gītā 5/21; 16/22).

Attachment, abides neither in the soul (self), which is a pure sentient fragment of God, nor in matter (prakṛti). It retains in the ego, of the embodied soul, and it seems to reside in the mind, intellect, senses and sense-objects. When a striver, ceases to identify himself with body and has no attachment for it, his attachment for objects etc., will totally perish. This attachment, originates out of ignorance (lack of discrimination). A man, is

attached to persons, and objects etc., because, he does not attach importance to, discrimination. A perfect devotee, has no ignorance, therefore he is totally free, from attachment.

A person, by an error having a disinclination for God, Whose fragment he (the self) is, is attached to the world, by regarding it as, his. When this assumed affinity, for the world is renounced, he becomes, even-minded. This even-mindedness, naturally leads him to, detachment.

A Vital Fact

In fact a being, has a natural inclination (devotion) to God. But, because of his assumed affinity with the world, this inclination (love) to God, is not revealed. This inclination for the Lord, appears as attachment, for the world. In spite of this attachment, to the world, love towards God, is not totally, effaced. But, as soon as a striver, is inclined towards Him, this attachment for the world, perishes in the same way as darkness disappears with sun-rise. Similarly, the more he is detached from the world, the more, he is inclined to God. After rooting out, attachment, detachment, also perishes, in the same way as fire also perishes after having burnt pieces of wood. With the disappearance of attachment and detachment, there is natural and effortless flow of devotion, to God. Then, the devotee surrenders himself to God, and all his actions are performed, in order to please Him. Being pleased with him, God offers love (devotion) to him. The devotee, offers devotion, again to God. It pleases the Lord much, and He again offers love (devotion), to him. Again, the devotee returns it, to Him. In this way, this pastime of give and take, of ever-enhancing love, goes on.

Tulyanindāstutiḥ—Praise or censure, is generally concerned, with one's name. This is, done by others. People praise or blame, a devotee by his name. A devotee, has neither egoistic feelings, nor a feeling of 'mine, in his name and body. So he remains

totally unaffected, by praise or blame. He has neither attachment for a person, who praises him nor aversion for a person, who blames him.

Common people, feel elated by praise or pained by blame, while strivers, blush from praise, and become cautious by blame. But an enlightened devotee, remains equanimous, in praise and blame, though for the good of others sometimes, he may behave, like strivers, blushing on hearing praise and being cautious on being blamed.

A devotee, beholds God, everywhere. So he remains unaffected by praise and blame, and does not make any distinction, between those who praise him and those who blame him. Moreover, he does not perform forbidden (evil) actions, and as far as, good actions are concerned, he thinks that it is He, Who was making him an instrument, performs them. So he remains even-minded, in praise and blame.

Maunī—An enlightened devotee, is called 'Maunī' (thoughtful), because he naturally thinks of God. He beholds God, in every thought that comes to his mind (Gītā 7/19). He constantly thinks of Him, only.

Here the term 'Maunī' (silent), cannot be taken for a person, who is restrained in speech, because by doing so, devotees who propagate devotion, and divine discourse, through speech, will not be called, devotees. Moreover, if silence (restraint in speech) had made a person a devotee, it would have been very easy, for anyone to become a devotee, merely by becoming silent and there would have been innumerable devotees, though only a few devotees exist. Besides, even a hypocrite, can remain silent. So, here the term 'Maunī, stands for an enlightened soul, who thinks of God.

'Santuṣṭo yena kenacit'—Other people, hold that a devotee is content, with bare means of bodily maintenance, but in fact, he is not content with mundane objects and circumstances. He is

content constantly, as he remains engrossed, in devotion to God. So, he remains even-minded, in favourable and unfavourable circumstances, by regarding these as happenings of His sweet will.

'**Aniketah**'—'Aniketah', is not he who is homeless, but one who is not attached, to a fixed abode, whether he is a householder, or an ascetic. A devotee, is not at all attached to his dwelling place, to his body (gross, subtle and causal), and has not the least, sense of mine, with these.

'**Sthiramatiḥ**'—A devotee, has neither any doubt nor contrary feeling, about the existence and form of God. He remains firm in mind, about it without any proof, such as scriptures etc., because, he always naturally remains engrossed in Him.

Desires, are stumbling blocks of steady-mindedness (Gītā 2/44). Therefore, when a man completely casts off desires, he is called, 'steady in mind' (Gītā 2/55). When a person, has desire to derive pleasure, out of contact of senses with sense-objects, he is attached to the world. This attachment, to the world is not renounced, even by regarding the world, as unreal in the same way, as a person gets attached to cinema, even by regarding the scene (persons and objects) as unreal or fake, or he is reminded of old scenes, by thinking of them, though he knows that they do not exist, at that time. Therefore, so long as a man has desires, from the heart for worldly pleasures, his worldly attachment, cannot be renounced, even by considering the world false or fake. Attachment, strengthens the independent existence of the world. When desire for mundane pleasures, is renounced, attachment for the world automatically perishes, and then the independent existence of the world, ceases to be, and the mind gets fixed on God.

'**Bhaktimānme priyo narah**'—In the term 'Bhaktimān', there is suffix 'Matup', in the word 'Bhakti', which shows that a person,

naturally has devotion (love for God). But he commits an error that instead of having devotion to God, he develops devotion for the world. So he cannot relish devotion for God, and his life becomes dull and insipid. An enlightened devotee, ever remains engrossed in sentiments of devotion. So he is called Bhaktimān (full of devotion). Such a man, full of devotion, is loving to Him.

The Lord, by the term 'Narah', means that, only he who has attained the aim of his life by realizing God, deserves to be called a 'Narah' (man). He, who hankers after mundane pleasure and prosperity, does not deserve, to be called a man.

[In these two verses, there is description of a perfect devotee, who remains established in equanimity, in the five pairs of opposites such as friend and foe, honour and dishonour, cold and heat, pleasure and pain, praise and blame. When a striver, attains equanimity in these five pairs, he attains total equanimity.]

An Important Fact Pertaining to This Topic

The Lord, in this topic from the thirteenth verse to the nineteenth verse, by using the expression 'Me priyaḥ' (loving to Me), four times and 'Priyo narah' (that man is loving to Me) the fifth time, divided the topic of marks of his enlightened devotees, into five groups—the first group, consisting of the thirteenth and the fourteenth verses, the second group, consisting of the fifteenth verse, the third group, of the sixteenth verse, the fourth group, of the seventeenth verse, and the fifth and last group, of the eighteenth and the nineteenth verses. It means, that there are five different groups of signs of enlightened devotees, rather than one, otherwise the Lord might not have repeated the expression, 'Me priyaḥ', (loving to Me), four times and 'Priyo narah', the fifth time.

All groups of these signs of enlightened devotees, include the absence of attachment and aversion, pleasure and

pain. In the first group, the terms 'Nirmamaḥ' and 'Adveṣṭā' respectively, stand for freedom from attachment and aversion, while the expression 'Samaduḥkhasukhaḥ' stands for freedom from (balanced in), pleasure and pain. In the second group, the expression 'Harṣāmarṣabha-yodvegaiḥ', stands for freedom from attachment and aversion, pleasure and pain. In the third group, the term 'Anapekṣaḥ' stands for freedom from attachment, the term 'Udāsīnaḥ' stands, for freedom from aversion while 'Gatavyathaḥ' stands for freedom from pleasure and pain. In the fourth group, the expressions 'Na kāṅkṣati', 'Na dveṣṭi', 'Na hr̥ṣyati' and 'Na śocati' respectively, stand for, freedom from attachment, aversion, pleasure and pain. In the last group, the expression 'Saṅgavivarjitaḥ' stands, for freedom from attachment, the term 'Santuṣṭaḥ' stands, for contentment in only God i.e., freedom from aversion while the expression 'Śītoṣṇasukhaduḥkheṣu samaḥ' stands, for freedom from pleasure and pain. Thus, there are clearly five different groups, otherwise the Lord, might have not made needless repetition of words.

As there are, five different groups, so a person who possesses the marks of anyone of the groups, is a loving devotee, of God. The Lord, while explaining the different marks of enlightened devotees, in each group, wants to mention that their virtues may slightly differ, according to their spiritual practice, fate, caste, order of life, circumstances and temperaments etc., but all of them, are totally free from attachment and aversion, pleasure and pain and such other defects; and they are even-minded and remain engrossed, in the welfare of all beings, equally.

A striver, by following the signs of anyone of the five groups, according to his inclination, faith, ability and temperament, should try to inculcate them, in him. He should not lose heart, certainly he will be successful.

Appendix—In these two verses the Lord has mentioned

such cases where it is difficult to be equanimous. If a striver becomes equanimous in such cases, it will not be difficult for him to be equanimous in other cases. To remain unaffected is 'samatā' (equanimity).

Though from the viewpoint of a devotee, there is no entity besides God, yet from the viewpoint of other people a devotee appears to be alike to foe and friend. In spite of having the knowledge of friendship and enmity, he remains even minded.

'Śītoṣṇa sukha duḥkheṣu'—A devotee remains equanimous in favourable and unfavourable circumstances pertaining to the body, the senses, the mind, the intellect and also to opinions and principles etc. He is neither attached to the favourable circumstances nor has an aversion to the unfavourable ones.

'Yo madbhaktaḥ sa me priyaḥ', 'bhaktimānme priyo naraḥ'—These expressions mean that they are loving to God because of their devotion for Him, not because of virtues (marks). Virtues are not significant but his devotion is significant.



Link:—In the preceding seven verses the Lord mentioned thirty-nine marks of enlightened devotees. Now in the next verse He answers Arjuna's question clearly.

ये तु धर्म्यामृतमिदं यथोक्तं पर्युपासते ।

श्रद्धधाना मत्परमा भक्तास्तेऽतीव मे प्रियाः ॥ २० ॥

ye tu dharmyāmṛtamidaṁ yathoktaṁ paryupāsate
śraddadhānā matparamā bhaktāste'tīva me priyāḥ

And those, who with faith, hold Me as their supreme goal, and follow this nectar of wisdom (law or doctrine), such devotees, are exceedingly dear to Me. 20

Comment:—

'Ye tu'—The term 'Ye' (who), has been used for those