

कच्चिन्नोभयविभ्रष्टाश्छिन्नाभ्रमिव नश्यति ।
अप्रतिष्ठो महाबाहो विमूढो ब्रह्मणः पथि ॥ ३८ ॥

kaccinnobhayavibhraṣṭaśchinnābhramiva naśyati
apraṭiṣṭho mahābāho vimūḍho brahmaṇaḥ pathi

O mighty-armed, the deluded and fallen in the path of God, without any hold, upon the world does he not perish like a broken cloud, deprived of both God-realization and worldly enjoyment? 38

Comment:—

[Arjuna seeks clarification, about the fate of a striver who has failed to attain perfection in Yoga.]

'Apratiṣṭho mahābāho vimūḍho brahmaṇaḥ pathi'—He renounces the desire, for worldly pleasures, honour and praise etc., and follows a spiritual discipline. But, he is not able to realize God, and at the time of death deviates, from Yoga viz., does not think of God.

'Kaccinnobhayavibhraṣṭaśchinnābhramiva naśyati'—Does he not perish like a broken cloud, deprived of both God-realization and worldly enjoyments? A split cloud does not descend on earth as rain, is separated from the main body and cannot join the other parts. Thus it is shattered. In similar the fate of a striver who renounces his dependence on the world, but at the same time fails to realize God? Does he meet with damnation?

Here, the illustration of a cloud is not quite apt, because a part of a cloud and the main body of clouds and the part to which it was going to rejoin—all the three belong to the same class, they are matter. But in the case of a striver, the world is matter (insentient), while he himself and God, are sentient. Thus they do not belong, to the same category.

In this verse, Arjuna means to say, that the soul being a fragment of God, is imperishable. If it has the aim to attain heaven, it might have gone to heaven or hell or the other lower births

of beasts and birds, but still would have remained in the world. What is the fate of a striver, who has renounced dependence on the world with the aim of attaining God, but could not realize the same and at the time of death, could not think of God?

An Exceptional Fact

Here failing in both does not mean that he has fallen from Yoga as well as God-realization. A striver cannot have a downfall, if he has attained God-realization. Here the illustration of a cloud, with a part separated from the main body and not joining the other clouds and is scattered in between the two, is not very apt, as a striver, who has not yet realized. God cannot be said, to have fallen from God-realization. Moreover, once God-realization is attained, there is no question of being detached from it. Thus, if a person fails to think of God at the last moment, he may be said to have failed in attaining God, but he cannot be said to have failed in both i.e., Yoga and God-realization. Therefore fallen from both here means that he is deprived of both God-realization and worldly enjoyments. Arjuna has also dwelt upon the same point, in the thirty-seventh verse. Thus a striver can deviate from Yoga, only if he has not realized God. After God-realization, there is no question of deviation or downfall from Yoga.



Link:—In the next verse, Arjuna prays to Lord Kṛṣṇa to dispel his doubt, expressed in the previous verse.

एतन्मे संशयं कृष्ण छेत्तुमर्हस्यशेषतः ।

त्वदन्यः संशयस्यास्य छेत्ता न ह्युपपद्यते ॥ ३९ ॥

etanme saṁśayaṁ kṛṣṇa chettumarhasyaśeṣataḥ
tvadanyaḥ saṁśayasyāśya chettā na hyupapadyate

O Kṛṣṇa, please dispel this doubt of mine completely; for who other than Yourself, can do so? 39