

here also he declares a Karmayogī, who performs actions, for the welfare of others selflessly, to be superior.

Appendix—In a striver if there is eagerness for salvation, there is generosity in his nature and there is compassion in his heart viz., he gets happy (pleased) with the happiness of others and becomes sad (compassionate) with the sufferings of others—a striver having possessed these three traits becomes eligible for Karmayoga. Being fit for Karmayoga, Karmayoga is easily practised.

In Karmayoga there is one division of 'Karma' (duty) and one division is of 'Yoga'. Proper utilization of one's things, power, ability; and rendering service to people—this is duty. By discharging one's duty there is disunion (disconnection) from the assumed union with the world—this is yoga. Duty has its relation with the world and yoga has its relation with God.



Link:—In response to Arjuna's question, why the Lord was urging him to take such a dreadful action as, warfare, He replied, "No one can ever remain even, for a moment without performing action." "Then He explained that he who, restraining the organs of action, thinks of the sense-objects, is a hypocrite, while he who engages himself in action without expecting any reward, is superior. Now in the next verse, He orders Arjuna to perform his allotted duty.

नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वं कर्म ज्यायो ह्यकर्मणः ।
शरीरयात्रापि च ते न प्रसिद्ध्येदकर्मणः ॥ ८ ॥

niyataṁ kuru karma tvaṁ karma jyāyo hyakarmaṇaḥ
śarīrayātrāpi ca te na prasiddhyedakarmaṇaḥ

Do perform thy prescribed duty, for action is superior to inaction. Besides even the maintenance of the body would not be possible for thee, by inaction. 8

Comment:—

'Niyataṁ kuru karma tvam'— A man is permitted to perform two types of actions—those as laid down in the scriptures such as, fasts and worship etc., and the allotted duty according to one's caste, order of life, nature and circumstance, such as eating food, doing business, construction of a house and guiding a person who has lost his way and so on. A man cannot perform all actions as laid down in the scriptures, thoroughly. But he can very easily abandon the forbidden actions; non-performance of prescribed actions is not very harmful. Abandonment of forbidden actions, such as falsehood, theft and violence etc., is very beneficial. When he abandons forbidden actions, actions sanctioned by the scriptures, are automatically performed by him.

In the Discipline of Action, action according to one's caste and sanctioned by the scriptures, is one's allotted duty, whether it is terrible or mild. Here Lord Kṛṣṇa explains to Arjuna, that as a Kṣatriya (member of the warrior class) it is his duty to fight (Gītā 18/43). Though the action involves violence and bloodshed, yet it is his allotted duty. In the second chapter also, the Lord told him that having regard for his own duty he should not falter (Gītā (2/31). In fact 'svadharma' (One's own duty) and 'niyata karma' (allotted duty), both are one and the same. For Duryodhana being a member of the warrior class, it was his duty to fight, yet it was not his allotted duty, as being unjust he wanted to usurp the Pāṇḍava's kingdom. For him, it was not a righteous and prescribed, duty.

'Karma jyāyo hyakarmaṇaḥ'—The Lord, in this verse is, answering the question put in the first verse, by using the same term 'jyāyaḥ' (superior). There, Arjuna put the question why He was urging him to perform the terrible action of waging the war, when according to Him knowledge was superior to action. In response to his question the Lord declared, a

person following the path of action, to be superior to person, following the path of inaction. Thus, Arjuna wants to escape the battle, while the Lord exhorts him to fight, as it is his allotted duty. Therefore, the Lord in the eighteenth chapter declares, "One should not abandon the duty suited to one's nature, even though it may be easy" (18/48), because by abandoning it, one is exposed to sin and one continues to be attached to it. Therefore, performance of allotted duty, is superior to renunciation of actions. Performance of actions without attachment, is far superior to those performed with attachment, because by doing so, affinity for actions is totally renounced. Therefore, the Lord in the first half of this verse, orders Arjuna to perform his allotted duty without attachment, while in the second half He declares that maintenance of the body would not be possible by inaction either.

In the Discipline of Action the Lord's main principle is "Action is superior to inaction." The same fact has been pointed out by the Lord, when he declares, "Let not thy attachment be to inaction" (Gītā 2/47). The reason is, that he who shirks his duty wastes his time in heedlessness, laziness and sleep or performs forbidden actions, which mislead him to a downfall.

It is better to be detached from actions by performing them, rather than through their non-performance. A person is in bondage, due to desire, attachment, partiality etc., whether he performs actions or not. In the path of action, if a striver has the aim to renounce desire, it can be renounced very easily, through the performance of action for the good of others.

'Śarīrayātrāpi ca te na prasiddhyedakarmaṇaḥ'— Arjuna had a misconception in his mind, that his affinity for actions would be automatically renounced, if he did not perform action. Therefore, Lord Kṛṣṇa persuades him to perform actions by several pleas, one of these was, that even the maintenance of body would not be possible, by inaction.

As in the Discipline of Knowledge, affinity for the world is renounced by discrimination, in the Discipline of Action, affinity is renounced by performing one's duty sincerely and thoroughly. Therefore, the Discipline of Action, should in no way be regarded as inferior to the Discipline of Knowledge. A Karmayogī, regarding the body as belonging to the world, uses it in rendering service to the world i.e., he has no sense of 'mineness', with it. He identifies the physical, subtle and causal bodies respectively, with the gross, subtle and causal world, while a Jñānayogī identifies himself with Brahma, the Absolute. Thus a Karmayogī, identifies the insentient elements while a Jñānayogī, identifies the sentient ones.

A Vital Fact Pertaining to Spiritual Discipline

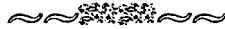
Generally strivers such as Arjuna, commit an error, that they insist on non-performance of actions. Secondly, while practising spiritual discipline they want favourable circumstances, so that they may attain their aim quickly. But such a desire, is a stumbling block to their spiritual progress.

A striver who wants to attain bliss easily and quickly, is a pleasure-seeker rather than a striver, because by doing so he has an eye, not on the spiritual discipline but on its fruit. The result is, that he gets tired of spiritual discipline and thus attains his aim late. A striver, who has a single-minded determination to attain bliss, is bent upon practising the spiritual discipline, whole-heartedly without thinking of the difficulties, duration, pleasure and pain. Not to talk of a striver, even a greedy merchant bears all hardships, without caring for hunger and thirst etc., as long as customers continue to come and there is a good sale. Similarly, a striver practises spiritual discipline with reverence and devotion, without caring for comfort and even the bare necessities of life. He has a keen desire to attain his object. He bemoans if he finds himself unable to overcome any obstacle in the path of spiritual discipline, while a striver,

who derives pleasure out of the spiritual discipline, gets angry when he finds an obstacle, in his way. The curiosity or desire of a striver enhances every moment, while the latter thinks of relaxing, having attained the aim quickly. The former thinks that he has nothing to do, except practising the spiritual discipline under all circumstances. So he applies his full power and attains bliss. But the latter, when he does not succeed quickly, may get disappointed. Therefore, a striver should attach more importance to the means, rather than to the end, like Goddess Pārvatī who in the Rāmācaritamānasa declares, "I have a firm determination that I shall marry only Lord Śiva, otherwise I shall remain unmarried even though millions of births may pass. I shall not disobey the preaching of sage Nārada, even if Lord Śiva may ask me to do so, a hundred times" (1/81/5). Mother Pārvatī is not time-conscious, in her penance.

In this verse, Lord Kṛṣṇa through Arjuna urges all strivers to perform their allotted duties very promptly, by renouncing the desire for favourable circumstances and pleasures, which are the main stumbling blocks to spiritual progress.

Appendix—A Karmayogī, who performs actions in a disinterested way, is not only superior to those who do not perform action or to those who do actions in an interested manner but is also superior to a 'Jñānayogī'—'Tayostu karma sannnyāsāt karmayogo viśiṣyate' (Gītā 5/2). Therefore the Lord here is laying special emphasis on the performance of actions in a disinterested way.



Link:—In the preceding verse, Lord Kṛṣṇa declared that without performing action we cannot keep body and soul together. It proves that performance of action is essential. But actions lead to attachment and bondage. So how can a man be free from this bondage? The Lord, answers the question in the next verse.