

In worldly paths (Karmayoga-Jñānayoga) a striver's endeavour is important. In practising the spiritual discipline a striver holds that his effort is predominant. But when a striver practises spiritual discipline by depending on God without considering his effort as dominant, then his path is unworldly (divine). The reason is that by being connected with God all becomes unworldly. Unless and until there is affinity for God, all is worldly.

Neither think others as evil doers, nor wish evil to others nor do evil to others—with this outlook 'Karmayoga' begins. Nothing is mine, I need nothing and I have to do nothing for myself—by accepting this truth 'Jñānayoga' begins.



न कर्मणामनारम्भान्नैष्कर्म्यं पुरुषोऽश्नुते ।
न च सन्न्यसनादेव सिद्धिं समधिगच्छति ॥ ४ ॥

na karmaṇāmanārambhānnaiṣkarmyaṁ puruṣo'śnute
na ca sannyasanādeva siddhiṁ samadhiḡacchati

Not by non-performance of actions, does a man attain freedom from the bondage of actions; nor by mere renunciation, does he attain perfection. 4

Comment:—

'Na karmaṇāmanārambhānnaiṣkarmyaṁ puruṣo'śnute'—In the Discipline of Action, performance of action is inevitable, because for a sage who wishes to attain success in Yoga, action is the means (6/3).*

A man has an impulse for action, which can be pacified by the performance of actions, without having any desire for fruits. If a striver performs actions having a desire for fruits, this impulse is not pacified, it is rather enhanced.

'Naiṣkarmyaṁ aśnute'—When a striver performs his duty,

* If he does not perform action, how will he come to know whether he remained equanimous in success and failure or not?

without any desire for fruit, he attains to the state of actionlessness i.e., he is released from the bondage of action. Such actions do not bear fruit, in the same way as a roasted or boiled seed loses its potency to sprout. Such actions lose their power of involving a man, in the bondage of birth and death.

A man can renounce desire, when he performs actions only for the welfare of others, as actions have affinity for the world, while the affinity of self is, for God. So long as he performs actions for himself, he cannot renounce desire and as long as he does not renounce desire, he cannot attain to the state of actionlessness.

'Na ca sannyasanādeva siddhiṁ samadhiḥ gacchati'— In the first half of this verse, the Lord has declared that a Karmayogī does not attain the state of actionlessness by non-performance of actions. In the second half, He declares that a Sāṅkhyayogī (a follower of the Discipline of Knowledge) does not attain perfection viz., a state of actionlessness by mere renunciation of action.

It is necessary for a striver to renounce the sense of doership, in order to attain perfection. So a Sāṅkhyayogī (follower of the Discipline of Knowledge) instead of renouncing the performance of action, must renounce egoism.

In Sāṅkhyayoga, actions can be performed and they can also be renounced to a certain extent, but in Karmayoga (Discipline of Action), action is necessary as, it is the means to attain success in Yoga viz., perfection (Gītā 6/3).

A Vital Fact

The Gītā, teaches a man, how to attain spiritual perfection by performing one's duty. It inspires him to perform actions, rather than to renounce them. So the Lord lays emphasis, on performing actions, in both the Disciplines of Action and Knowledge.

It is natural that when a striver aims at salvation, he gets tired of the worldly affairs and wants to renounce those affairs.

Similarly, Arjuna also being tired of actions, asks Lord Kṛṣṇa why He is urging him to be engaged in this terrible action of waging war, when both the Disciplines of Action and Knowledge lead to equanimity. But the Lord, orders Arjuna to perform actions in both the Disciplines. By the Discipline of Action, He orders him to perform action by being even-minded (Gītā 2/48), while in the Discipline of Knowledge He orders him to fight (Gītā 2/18). Therefore, the Lord urges people to perform actions rather than to renounce these. But the Lord asks them to renounce desire and attachment which are like poison, in actions.

A striver instead of renouncing the performance of actions, should renounce his attachment to them. Yogīs (men of action), having abandoned attachment, perform actions only by the body, mind, intellect or merely by the senses, in order to render service to the world, without any selfish motive (Gītā 5/11). In the Discipline of Knowledge, there is predominance of discrimination, between the real and the unreal. Therefore, a Jñānayogī assumes that it is modes which are acting on the modes i.e., all the actions are performed by the body, senses, mind and intellect etc., while he does nothing at all (Gītā 3/28, 5/8-9).

All strivers experience that as soon as, a keen desire for salvation is aroused in them, they have disinclination for actions, things and persons (members of the family). But being attached to a body, they have a desire for rest, which is an obstacle to their progress. Generally, strivers believe, that they can progress in the spiritual field by renouncing actions, things and company of people. But the fact is, that renouncement of attachment to actions, things and people is an important factor. In the Discipline of Knowledge, it is difficult to renounce attachment, without keen dispassion. But in the Discipline of Action, attachment is easily renounced, by performing actions for others, even without keen dispassion.

In the Gītā, it is also mentioned that a striver may practise

spiritual discipline in solitude. But in solitude, a sāttvika (virtuous) person devotes his time, in being busy with spiritual practice and adoration, a rājasa (passionate) person spends it in projections and distractions, while a tāmasa (ignorant) man, wastes it in sleep, indolence and heedlessness. Therefore, a striver should have an inclination to dwell in solitude, in order to devote his time and energy to spiritual activities, but he should perform his mundane duty also, very promptly without being attached to it. He should be attached, neither to people nor to inaction. Detachment leads a striver to salvation very quickly. In fact external solitude is not the real solitude, because the body is also a fragment of the world. Therefore, real solitude consists in renouncing affinity with the body and the world i.e., in renouncing egoism and attachment.

Appendix—The divinity which is ours, is in us and is now, is not realized by doing something because that is never unattained. We shall do some action, then that reality will be realized—this conception strengthens identification of the self with the body. Every action has a beginning and an end, therefore by action only the thing will be gained which does not really exist. But because of affinity for Prakṛti in every being, there is an inner urge for actions which does not enable him to be actionless. In order to pacify this urge, it is inevitable not to do what ought not to be done, and do without the sense of mine and with disinterest what ought to be done viz., not to do any action for oneself but do only for the welfare of others. By doing actions for oneself, the impetus for actions will never end because the self is eternal while actions are transitory. Therefore by performing actions selflessly for the welfare of others, the urge for actions calms down, affinity for Prakṛti gets renounced and God, Who pervades everywhere and every time will be revealed and realized.

