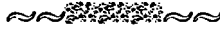


everyone His friend and He elevates him equal to Himself. As Niṣādarāja was a devotee who had attained perfection, Vibhīṣaṇa was a striver and Sugrīva was passionate, but Lord Rāma accepted all the three as His friends. The deities etc., don't possess this special virtue of making a devotee their friend. Therefore in the Vedas the soul has been declared as the friend of God—

dvā suparṇā sayujā sakhāyā samānam vṛkṣam pariśasvajāte
(Muṇḍaka 3/1/1, Śvetā. 4/6)

In the Gītā Lord Kṛṣṇa has said to Arjuna—'bhakto'si me sakhā ceti' (4/3)—'thou art My devotee and My friend'. Here the Lord has called Arjuna a 'devotee' from Arjuna's point of view,* but from His point of view, He has called him 'friend'. 'Mamaivāṁśo jīvaloke' (15/7)—in this expression also the Lord by the term 'eva' has mentioned that the soul is His manifestation. 'The soul is My fragment only'—this expression means that in the soul there is no fragment of Prakṛti at all.



Link:—Now Lord Kṛṣṇa, describes the fruit according to worship.

**अन्तवत्तु फलं तेषां तद्भवत्यल्पमेधसाम् ।
देवान्देवयजो यान्ति मद्भक्ता यान्ति मामपि ॥ २३ ॥**

**antavattu phalaṁ teṣāṁ tadbhavatyalpamedhasām
devāṇdevayaḥ yānti madbhaktā yānti māmapi**

But, the fruit gained by these people of meagre intellect, is perishable. The worshippers of the gods reach the gods; whereas, My devotees attain Me, alone. 23

Comment:—

'Antavattu phalaṁ teṣāṁ tadbhavatyalpamedhasām'—The

*The Lord called Arjuna His devotee because Arjuna had taken refuge in Him—'Śādhi māṁ tvāṁ prapannam' (Gītā 2/7).

worshippers of the gods, gain finite and perishable fruit. Here, a question arises, that should the fruit ordained by God be imperishable? Then, why do they gain perishable fruit? The answer is, that they have desire for perishable fruit, moreover, they accept gods' entities, separate from God. But, if they worship the gods, without a desire for fruit or worship, them as Divine manifestations, having no separate entity, they can gain imperishable fruit (i.e.,) can realize God.

By using the term 'Tat', Lord Kṛṣṇa means to say, that the fruit is ordained, only by Him, but because of desire, it becomes perishable.

By using the phrase 'Alpamedhasām', (meagre intellect), Lord Kṛṣṇa says, that such devotees are of meagre intellect, because they have to undertake several vows, and follow several methods, but the fruit is finite and perishable. So, in the worship of the Lord, a devotee without undertaking vows and without following various methods, gains infinite and imperishable fruit. Worshippers of the gods, follow the cycle of birth and death, while the worshippers of the Lord, being free from the shackles of birth and death, attain salvation.

'Devāndevayaḥ yānti madbhaktā yānti māmapi'—Worshippers of the gods attain at the maximum the gods, whereas devotees of the Lord, attain Him. As they are votaries of gods, they are not devoted to the Lord, so their intellect is meagre and mediocre. The devotees of God, whether they worship Him with a desire or without a desire, attain Him. But, it is not necessary that their desires, may be satisfied. God satisfies their desires only, if these are for their welfare. But if they are harmful, for the devotees, the Lord does not satisfy these.

Our affinity for God is eternal, but we are reminded of it through adoration. Having attained Him, there is no return to this world (Gītā 15/6). But our affinity with the gods, is not eternal and therefore, having attained to them, we have to return to this

world of mortals (Gītā 9/21).

"My devotees attain Me alone." Having this feeling, the Lord has referred to four types of devotees—seekers of worldly objects, the sufferers, the seekers of knowledge and men of wisdom, virtuous and noble (7/16—18).

'Madbhaktā yānti māmapi'—It means, that even a vilest sinner, being His fragment may attain Him, if he abandons his affinity, for the world which is an assumed one.

An Exceptional Fact

The whole universe, is nothing besides, the manifestation of God. But, we are unable to realize this fact, because, first we accept the world as a separate entity from God, and secondly, we have desires. If we accept the universe as Divine manifestation, our desires, will be rooted out, or if we root out desires, the universe, will be seen as a Divine manifestation. Then, all our actions will be performed, as a service to God. If both are done together, we will be immensely and instantly benefited.

Appendix—The worshippers of the gods at the most can reach the abode of gods from where they have to return to the mortal world, but the worshippers of God attain Him only. If a striver regards the deity as the manifestation of God or worships him in a disinterested manner, he will attain salvation viz., will attain God. But if he does not regard the deity as the manifestation of God or if he does not worship Him in a disinterested manner, he will not attain salvation.

The defect in the worship of deities is that the fruit of their worship is perishable because their rights are also limited. Therefore those, who instead of God, worship other deities, they are men of meagre intellect. If they had not been the men of poor intellect, why would have they worshipped the deities, the fruit of whose worship is perishable? They would have worshipped God or would have regarded the deities as the manifestation of

God. The worship of God is very easy as it needs no technique, no rules, no labour; in it there is only predominance of devotion. But in the worship of deities, there is predominance of actions, prescriptions and objects.

A man may have the knowledge of several worldly sciences, arts and crafts etc., yet he is a man of meagre intellect. In fact that knowledge strengthens ignorance. But he who has known God, he may not have knowledge of the worldly science, art and craft etc., yet he is 'sarvavit' (knower of all) (Gītā 15/19).



Link:—Worshippers of the gods, gain the fruit which is finite and perishable. Then, why do men get entangled in it? Why do not they worship, God? An explanation comes in the next verse.

अव्यक्तं व्यक्तिमापन्नं मन्यन्ते मामबुद्धयः ।

परं भावमजानन्तो ममाव्ययमनुत्तमम् ॥ २४ ॥

**avyaktam vyaktimāpannam manyante māmabuddhayaḥ
param bhāvamajānanto mamāvyayamanuttamam**

Men who lack understanding think of Me, the unmanifest as a perceptible ordinary human being, not knowing My supreme state as immutable and unexcelled. 24

Comment:—

'Avyaktam vyaktimāpannam manyante māmabuddhayaḥ param bhāvamajānanto mamāvyayamanuttamam'—Men of poor understanding, think of Me as having been born, and dead, just like ordinary men. They think, that I am also manifested, in the mid-state only, like other beings (Gītā 2/28). They do not know Me, as imperishable, uniform, immaculate, all-pervading, untainted, beyond time, space and causation, and as an incarnation of God. So they, instead of worshipping Me, worship the gods.

There is not a total negation of discrimination in them. But, their understanding is poor, because they do not admit