

and the world is snapped off and the Self or Divinity is revealed. Therefore he takes delight and is gratified and is contented in the Self alone.

The worldly injunction and prohibition—both are indeed prohibition (negation) because these two can't last (remain). A Karmayogī having renounced affinity for the world rises above all prescriptions and prohibitions. 'Tasya kāryaṁ na vidyate' (He has no duty to perform).



नैव तस्य कृतेनार्थो नाकृतेनेह कश्चन ।

न चास्य सर्वभूतेषु कश्चिदर्थव्यपाश्रयः ॥ १८ ॥

naiva tasya kṛtenārtho nākṛteneha kaścana
na cāsyā sarvabhūteṣu kaścīdarthavyapāśrayaḥ

For him in this world, there is no gain whatsoever, in the performance of an action or its non-performance, nor does he have any self-interest in other beings. 18

Comment:—

'Naiva tasya kṛtenārthaḥ'—Everyone has a tendency to do some work or the other, for himself. So long as a man has the tendency to acquire worldly things, some work remains to be done by him. He is bound by the desire of acquiring something or the other. Performance of duty is inevitable in order to get rid of that desire.

Actions are performed in two ways—either in order to satisfy desire or to get rid of desire. Common men work in order to satisfy their desires, while a Karmayogī performs actions, in order to get rid of desires. Therefore, an enlightened soul being free from desire, has not the least affinity for the performance of duty. Actions are performed by him, automatically without any selfish motive, for the welfare of the entire creation.

Such a God-realized soul realizes that all the worldly objects,

body, senses, mind and intellect etc., are not his own, but these belong to the world.

So, these should be utilized for the world. This is, because no action can be performed without the help of the world. Apart from this, matter required for action, is also an offshoot of the world. It is in no way related to one's own self. Therefore, nothing is ours. The cosmos can never be meant for an individual. Here, lies the fault with man, that he tries to utilise the cosmic entity for his individual purposes. This generates unrest. If he utilises his body, senses, mind, intellect and matter etc., for universal use, he can get a state of quietude. This characteristic exists in an accomplished Karmayogī, that all his so-called body, senses, mind, intellect and matter etc., are utilised for the service of the entire world. Thus, he is totally unconcerned about his bodily activities. Even then, a great person instinctively performs excellent deeds, ideal for the generality of men. Thus, by utilizing these for the world, he attains great peace and his actions are exemplary.

'Nākṛtenha kaścana'—He, who assumes his affinity for the body, senses, mind and intellect etc., and remains inclined towards indolence and sloth, does not want to perform actions, because he wants to enjoy pleasure which arises from sleep, indolence and sloth, and which is declared to be of the nature of ignorance (Gītā 18/39). But, how can a great soul, who transcends even the Sāttvika happiness, be inclined towards pleasure, arising out of ignorance? When he has not even the least affinity for body etc., how can he be inclined towards indolence and heedlessness etc.?

A Vital Fact

Generally strivers attach importance to actionlessness. They want to place themselves in trance (Samādhi) and, being completely unattached with actions, so that no thoughts are left to act. This is an excellent and useful thing no doubt, but not

as a principle (final truth). Though inaction is superior to action, yet it is not the goal.

Inclination and abstention, both are within the realm of nature. Upto the 'Nirvikalpa' trance, every stage is within the reign of prakṛti, because deviation is possible even at this stage. Every action takes place in prakṛti. Even a deviation from trance involves action and without action such deviation is impossible. Therefore like walking, speaking, laughing and hearing etc., sleeping, sitting, standing, keeping quiet, fainting and going into a trance, also are actions. The real essence (conscious self) is free from inclination and abstention both. The self, is an untainted illuminator of action and inaction both. When a person identifies the self with the body, actions are divided into two classes—performance and non-performance. But in fact, both of these belong to the same class. Till attachment to the body persists, non-performance of an action, is also an action. As 'go' is a verb so 'stand' is also a verb and both involve activity, though in the former the activity is clearly seen, while in the latter it is not apparent.

The question of performance or non-performance of actions, arises only when a man has affinity with a body. Unless such affinity is there, no action is possible.

An enlightened soul who renounces his total affinity for nature, and its evolutes, (the insentient matter), realizes the self, which transcends both activity and non-activity. Therefore, a striver should renounce his affinity for matter (egoism and attachment to the body). The self (tattva) ever remains the same, as always.

'Na cāśya sarvabhūteṣu kaścīdarthavyapāśrayaḥ'—When a great soul has not the least selfish affinity for a body and the world, all his actions are automatically performed for the welfare of others. As limbs of a body are ever engaged in doing good for the body, the body (a fragment of the world) of that enlightened soul, ever remains engaged in doing good to the world. Moreover, he has not the least pride or desire for fruit or

selfish motive, like a hand when it washes the face.

In the preceding verse, the Lord declared that there exists no work that needs to be done by a God-realized soul. In order to explain the reason, the Lord mentions three factors—(1) Such a soul has no interest in what is done. (2) He has no interest in what is not done. (3) He does not depend on anything or creature for any interest of his.

In fact, the self has no interest in what is done or what is not done and has no affinity with, either any being or thing because no action is performed by the self. All actions are performed, only when the self assumes its affinity for nature, and the things born of nature. Therefore, no action is to be performed for the self.

So long as a man has a desire to do, to acquire and to live, and he is afraid of death, he has got to perform actions. But when he renounces this desire and is not afraid of death, he has not to perform action, but action (duty) is automatically performed by him. One who is susceptible to deviation from duty needs advice.

An Important Fact

In the Gītā, Lord Kṛṣṇa explains the marks of a God-realized soul according to the Discipline, which they follow as strivers. The same description has been given here, in the seventeenth and the eighteenth verses.

The topic of the Discipline of Action, begins from the thirty-ninth verse of the second chapter, but the gist has been explained in the forty-seventh verse of the second chapter, when the Lord declares it in four stages:—

- (1) Thy right is to work only.
- (2) Have no desire for its fruit.
- (3) Do not be the cause of the fruit of action.
- (4) And let thy attachment be not towards inaction.

In this verse (3/18) is the description of a God-realized soul, who has attained perfection through Karmayoga, as described in the previous verse. Whatever, has been said there, (in 2/47) in the second and the third point for the striver, the same has been said, in the second half of this verse, for the God-realized soul, that he has no affinity for any creature or thing. Similarly, whatever has been stated in the first and the fourth point for the striver, the same has been said, in the first half of this verse for a God-realized soul, that he has no interest in what is done or what is not done. Thus, in the verses seventeenth and eighteenth, the description of the marks of a God-realized soul, who has realized Him, through the Discipline of Action, has been given.

According to the Discipline of Action, the eighteenth verse should have preceded the seventeenth verse, because when a God-realized soul, has no interest in what is done or what is not done, and when he does not depend on any creature for any interest of his, he gets joy, satisfaction and contentment in his own self. But, in the sixteenth verse the Lord declared, "He who does not perform his duty, lives in vain." Therefore, in the seventeenth verse by using the expression 'Yaḥ tu' (who but), the Lord explains that if a God-realized soul, does not perform his duty, he does not live in vain, but his life is very useful, as he has attained the aim of human life. Therefore, nothing remains to be done by him.

The state in which nothing remains to be done, can be attained even by a common man, by performing his duty, efficiently without expecting any reward, because everyone deserves to attain Him. The practice of Karmayoga, can be performed in all circumstances. The desire for sensual pleasure, is the main obstacle to the performance of one's duty. So, if a striver wipes out this desire for pleasure by serving others, without having any selfish motive, he can attain supreme peace by getting rid of all pains, and sorrows of life. As far as the supreme peace

is concerned, everyone is equally deserving, to attain it, while it is not possible, for everyone to have worldly possessions in equal share.

Appendix—In the world ‘performance of action’ and ‘non-performance of action’ are related expressions. Therefore ‘I have to do nothing’—this is also an action. But in Godhood ‘inaction is natural and automatic. The reason is that the divine entity has nothing to do with action or inaction. Therefore a God-realized Karmayogī has neither any relation with a thing, nor with a person nor with an action—‘yo’vatiṣṭhati neṅgate’ (Gītā 14/23). From his view-point nothing exists except the divinity.



Link:—The Lord in the next verse explains, what a striver should do in order to attain the state of a God-realized soul, described in the preceding verse.

तस्मादसक्तः सततं कार्यं कर्म समाचर ।
असक्तो ह्याचरन्कर्म परमाप्नोति पूरुषः ॥ १९ ॥

tasmādasaktaḥ satataṁ kāryaṁ karma samācara
asakto hyācarankarma paramāpnoti pūruṣaḥ

Therefore, perform duty efficiently without attachment, for by actions without attachment, man attains the Supreme. 19

Comment:—

'Tasmādasaktaḥ satataṁ kāryaṁ karma samācara'—The term 'Tasmāt' (therefore) has been used to connect the preceding verse with this verse. In the preceding verse, the Lord declared that actions are performed by a God-realized soul, for the welfare of others though there is no need for him to perform these. Therefore, the Lord uses the term 'tasmāt', to make Arjuna to realize God, by performing his duty without expecting any reward. The reason is, that the self has no interest in what is done or what is not done. Actions are ever performed for others,