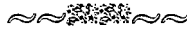


non-performance of actions, and having a disinclination for the world, meditate on God and experience a trance, also perform actions. The feeling, that God (perfection) will be attained through meditation and trance, is also a subtle form of action, because one expects God-realization through performance of actions, in the form of meditation and trance, while God is beyond action, as well as inaction.

The Lord declares, that He will explain the reality about action by which one will attain God, immediately. God pervades everywhere, all the time, through things, persons, bodies, senses, minds, intellects and life-breaths etc., equally. He remains united with us, when we perform actions and when we do not perform actions. But, we are unable to realize Him, because of our affinity for actions and objects, born of nature (prakṛti).

A man has an egoistic notion, equally during the performance of actions, as well as during the non-performance of actions, but his egoism merges in the world, when he instead of performing actions for himself, performs these, for the welfare of the world.



*Link:—In the next verse Lord Kṛṣṇa inspires Arjuna to know the reality of action and inaction.*

**कर्मणो ह्यपि बोद्धव्यं बोद्धव्यं च विकर्मणः ।**

**अकर्मणश्च बोद्धव्यं गहना कर्मणो गतिः ॥ १७ ॥**

**karmaṇo hyapi boddhavyaṁ boddhavyaṁ ca vikarmaṇaḥ  
akarmaṇaśca boddhavyaṁ gahanā karmaṇo gatiḥ**

The reality about actions must be known, as well about forbidden actions, even so the reality about inaction, must be understood; for mysterious, is the nature of action. 17

*Comment:—*

'Karmaṇo hyapi boddhavyam'— He, who remains untainted while performing actions, knows the truth about actions, described

in the eighteenth verse, by the expression, "He who sees inaction in action."

Actions can be divided, into three groups, according to the motive by which these are performed (i.e.,) action, inaction and forbidden action. An activity undertaken, according to spiritual injunctions with a desire for fruit, is called, action. Action which is performed, being free from the desire for fruit, sense of mine and attachment, for the welfare of others, is classed, as inaction. Even prescribed action, performed with the motive of doing evil to others, or giving pain to them, is classed as, forbidden action.

**'Akarmaṇaśca boddhavyam'**— He, who performs actions, while remaining untainted, knows the reality about inaction, described in the eighteenth verse, by the expression 'action in inaction.'

**'Boddhavyaṁ ca vikarmaṇaḥ'**—When a man has desire, actions are performed. But when desire is enhanced, then forbidden actions (sinful) are done.

The Lord, in the thirty-eighth verse of second chapter, declared, "Treating alike, pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat, get ready for battle, the horrible deed involving violence; thus thou shalt not incur sin." It means, that if actions are performed with equanimity, the seemingly forbidden actions are also transformed, into inaction.

Forbidden actions, are called 'Vikarma'. Desire is the cause of forbidden actions (Gītā 3/36-37).<sup>\*</sup> Therefore, in order to give up forbidden actions, one should renounce desire. The essence of 'Vikarma' (sin), is desire and to know the essence of 'Vikarma', is to abandon all forbidden actions physically and so leave no trace of desire which is the cause of 'Vikarma'.

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<sup>\*</sup> In the sixteenth chapter where the demoniac nature has been described there from the eighth verse to the twenty-third verse the term 'Kāma' (desire) has been used nine times. It shows that desire is the cause of demoniac nature (forbidden actions).

**'Gahanā karmaṇo gatiḥ'**—It is difficult to understand, which actions bind a man and which liberate him. Even learned men, knowing the scriptures cannot decide, 'What is action?' 'What is inaction?' and 'What is forbidden action?' Arjuna also, finds himself in a dilemma and so he thinks, that the performance of his duty of fighting is a cruel deed. Therefore, the Lord states, that mysterious is the nature of action.

**Question:**—In this verse, the Lord declares, that truth about forbidden actions must be known, while He does not make mention of the forbidden actions, in the topic from the nineteenth verse to the twenty-third verse. Why?

**Answer:**—In the topic (from the nineteenth verse to the twenty-third verse), the Lord, has prominently mentioned inaction in action so that all actions may turn to inaction i.e., actions may not lead to bondage. A desire is the root of every action. As the desire intensifies, it results in forbidden actions. Therefore it is said that Vikarma is quite near to karma. Therefore, the Lord has referred to forbidden actions, as wretched, so that men may renounce these, as well as the desire which is their main root.

First, desire leads a man to action, and then its enhancement, leads one to perform forbidden actions. But, when desire is renounced, all actions turn to, inaction. The significance of the topic, discussed in these verses, is to know the essence of inaction and what leads to annihilation of desires. When desire is renounced forbidden actions are not performed. So the Lord, does not consider it necessary to include 'Vikarma', in the topic, from the nineteenth to the twenty-third verses. Secondly, the Lord does not want to dwell upon forbidden actions in detail, because these must be renounced as they lead to sins and hells. But, in this topic there is an emphasis on, the renunciation of desire—in 4/19 by the expression 'devoid of desires and thoughts of the world', in 4/20 by, the expression 'having abandoned attachment to the fruit of action', in 4/21 by the expression 'having no desire',

in 4/22 by 'even-minded in success and failure', and in 4/23 by 'One who is devoid of attachment and works for sacrifice.'

Thus, the Lord has said, that truth about forbidden actions must be known, so that a man, having known it, may renounce desire, which is the root of forbidden actions.

**Appendix**—It is very difficult to gaze what fruit an action bears at present and in future for others. While performing an action a man thinks that it is of benefit to him but actually it causes harm to him. He may work for profit but it may end in loss. He acts for pleasure whereas his act results in pain. The reason is that due to the sense of doership and the desire for fruit (attachment to pleasure), man cannot determine the true nature of actions.



*Link:—In the next verse, the Lord eulogizes a person who knows the truth, about actions.*

**कर्मण्यकर्म यः पश्येदकर्मणि च कर्म यः ।**

**स बुद्धिमान्मनुष्येषु स युक्तः कृत्स्नकर्मकृत् ॥ १८ ॥**

**karmaṇyakarma yaḥ paśyedakarmaṇi ca karma yaḥ  
sa buddhimānmanuṣyeṣu sa yuktaḥ kṛtsnakarmakṛt**

He, who sees inaction in action and action in inaction, is wise among men, he is a Yogī and performs all his duties. 18

*Comment:—*

'Karmaṇyakarma yaḥ paśyet'—'Seeing inaction in action' means, to remain untainted during performance or non-performance of actions. It means also that performance or non-performance of actions, is not for the self. When a man thinks that he is the doer and so he should reap the fruit of action, he is bound by such actions. As actions are perishable, so is their fruit. The self, is eternal and has no affinity for the changing actions, and their fruits. Yet, It is bound, because of the desire, for fruit. Therefore, the Lord in the fourteenth verse declared, "Actions don't bind