

'Svādhyāyajñānayaajñāḥ'—Study of the scriptures, such as the Gītā, the Rāmāyaṇa, the Bhāgavata, the Vedas and the Upaniṣad etc., as well as, the study of one's own self and inclinations—all constitute, the holy sacrifice of knowledge.

The Lord, while explaining the merit of the study of Gītā declares, "He who studies this sacred dialogue (the Gītā) of ours, by him, I would be worshipped through the sacrifice of knowledge" (Gītā 18/70). It means, that the study of Gītā is a sacrifice of knowledge. He, who is lost in reflection, of the gospel of the Gītā and makes efforts to understand it, performs the sacrifice of knowledge.



अपाने जुह्वति प्राणं प्राणेऽपानं तथापरे ।  
 प्राणापानगती रुद्ध्वा प्राणायामपरायणाः ॥ २९ ॥  
 अपरे नियताहाराः प्राणान्प्राणेषु जुह्वति ।  
 सर्वेऽप्येते यज्ञविदो यज्ञक्षपितकल्मषाः ॥ ३० ॥

apāne juhvati prāṇam prāṇe'pānam tathāpare  
 prāṇāpānagatī ruddhvā prāṇāyāmaparāyaṇāḥ  
 apare niyatāhārāḥ prāṇānprāṇeṣu juhvati  
 sarve'pyete yajñavidō yajñakṣapitakalmaṣāḥ

Others offer as sacrifice (yajña), the outgoing breath in the incoming, and the others in reverses restraining the course of the outgoing and incoming breaths, solely absorbed in control of their breaths (prāṇāyāma). Others who regulate their diet, could offer the breath of life to the vital air (prāṇa). All these are knowers of yajña and by that have their sins destroyed. 29-30

*Comment:—*

'Apāne juhvati prāṇam prāṇe'pānam tathāpare prāṇāpānagatī ruddhvā prāṇāyāmaparāyaṇāḥ'—Heart is the abode of outgoing

\* In this verse is one subject, 'others' and one verb, 'sacrifice' therefore, here restraint of birth includes inhalation, retention and exhalation of breath.

breath, while the seat of incoming breath, is anus. The Yogīs, practise inhalation through the left nostril. That air having taken the life-air which abides in the heart with it, passing through the navel merges with the incoming breath. This is called 'Pūraka' (Inhalation). When the outgoing and the incoming breaths, are restrained, it is called 'Kumbhaka' (retention of breath). After that, the air from inside is exhaled through the right nostril. That air, having taken the outgoing and the incoming breaths, is exhaled. This is, sacrifice of the outgoing breath, in the incoming breath. It is called 'recaka' (exhalation). Inhalation is practised by uttering the name of the Lord four times, while retention, of breath is practised by uttering the same name, sixteen times, and exhalation, is practised by uttering the same name eight times.

Thus Yogīs, through the left nostril, practise inhalation, retention of breath and exhalation and then, through the right nostril practise inhalation, retention of breath and exhalation. Repetition of this process, is known as the sacrifice of restraint of the breath. When restraint of breath is practised, in order to attain God, without expecting any other reward, all sins perish.

'Apare niyatāhārāḥ prāṇānpṛāṇeṣu juhvati'—Only those strivers, who regulate their diet can offer as sacrifice their life-breaths (prāṇa) for life-breaths. He who eats too much or abstains too much from eating, cannot practise this restraint, of breath (Gītā 6/16-17).

The sacrifice of life-breaths (prāṇa) by life-breaths means, sacrifice of the incoming breath into the incoming breath and of the outgoing breath, into the outgoing breath, i.e., the acts of inhalation and exhalation, both are suspended. This is called 'Stambhavṛtti prāṇāyāma' (absolute restraint of the breath). Through this restraint of the breath, passions are naturally controlled and sins are destroyed. When this sacrifice is practised, with the aim of God-realization, it leads to the purification of the mind and then to God-realization.

'Sarve'pyete yajñavidō yajñakṣapitakalmaṣāḥ'—The expression 'sarve'pyete' (all these), has been used for those strivers, who perform sacrifice (duties), as described from the twenty-fourth verse to the first half of the thirtieth verse. Performance of these sacrifices, destroys their sins, and leads them to god-realization.

In fact all sacrifices aim at the renunciation of affinity, for actions. Those, who know this fact, are the real knowers of sacrifice. When affinity for actions, is totally renounced, God is realized. Those who perform sacrifice, instead, for God-realization, for acquiring pleasure here as well as hereafter, do not know, the reality about sacrifice. It is desire for the perishable pleasures, which leads to bondage. The Lord declares, "Those who seek worldly enjoyment repeatedly go and return" (Gītā 9/21). Therefore, those who perform, even great sacrifices with worldly desires, have to follow the bondage, of birth and death.

### An Important Fact

During sacrifice, oblation is offered into fire. The oblation has different shapes, It loses its identity and becomes one with the fire. Similarly, when all the means of God-realization, which have been described here as sacrifice, are offered to God, these lose their identity, and become one with God. If these retain their separate existence, it means, that they have not been offered, as sacrifice.

The Lord, started this topic of the reality of actions, (seeing inaction in action), from the sixteenth verse. The reality about actions is, that he who performs actions as sacrifice i.e., for the welfare of others, is not bound by them. As everything put into fire is burnt to ashes, so are actions, which are performed for the sake of sacrifice, dissolved entirely i.e., are reduced to nothing (Gītā 4/23).

Day to day actions, performed for the welfare of others, without any selfish motive, lead to God-realization. But, even virtuous

actions, performed with a selfish motive (with the expectation of their fruits) cannot lead to God-realization, because it is a desire for the perishable, which binds a man. So long as, he assumes his affinity for the world, in the form of its materials and actions, he has attachment to acquire something and to do something. This attachment, is called a desire to acquire and an 'urge to act'.

In fact, the real desire (need) of a man is, to attain God whose fragment, he is. But, he wants to satisfy this need by acquiring worldly objects because of his inclination for the world and disinclination for God. How can, the perishable objects satisfy the imperishable fragment (the self) of the Lord? So long as, he has an inclination for the world, he has a desire to acquire something or the other. In order to, acquire it, he has to act. Thus, so long as, he has a desire to acquire and an urge to act viz., he has affinity with materials and actions, he has to follow, the cycle of birth and death. How to get liberated from this cycle? One can be liberated from, this cycle of birth and death, when one performs actions for the welfare of others, without having any desire. This is called sacrifice or an ideal for others, or actions for the welfare of others.

When actions, are performed for the welfare of others, the affinity for the world is renounced, and a man gets detached from these. If actions are performed for the sake of the Lord, a striver's affinity, for the world is renounced, he gets detached from actions, and he attains devotion to God which is an uncommon trait, of a striver.

**Appendix**—Performance of actions without any selfish motive, only for the welfare of others is called 'yajña' (sacrifice). By sacrifice all actions are transformed into inaction viz., they don't lead to bondage. There is mention of twelve kinds of sacrifice from the twenty-fourth verse to the thirtieth verse and they are as follows—

(i) Brahmayajña—Realizing the doer, the action, the instrument and object etc., in every action as Brahma.

(ii) Bhagavadarpaṇarūpa yajña—Assuming all actions and objects only God's and only for Him.

(iii) Abhinnatārūpa yajña—Having total disinclination for the unreal, merger in God viz., having no independent existence of one's own apart from God.

[Kartavya-karmarūpa yajña—performance of all actions for the welfare of others.]

(iv) Saṁyamarūpa yajña—In loneliness not to allow the senses to incline mentally towards the sensual objects.

(v) Viṣaya-havanarūpa yajña—In day to day life to keep the senses free from attachment and aversion even when the senses come in contact with sense-objects (Gītā 2/64-65).

(vi) Samādhirūpa yajña—By restraining all the functions of the senses and breath to get established in trance kindled by knowledge.

(vii) Dravya yajña—Utilization of all materials for the service of others in a selfless spirit.

(viii) Tapoyajña—Facing difficulties happily while discharging one's duty.

(ix) Yogayajña—To remain equanimous in success and failure, in favourable and unfavourable circumstances.

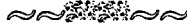
(x) Svādhyāyarūpa jñānayajña—Study of the sacred scriptures and chanting the Lord's holy names etc., for the good of others.

(xi) Prāṇāyāmarūpa yajña—Control of breaths by 'pūraka' (inhalation), 'Kumbhaka' (retention) and 'recaka' (exhalation).

(xii) Stambhavṛtti (fourth) prāṇāyāmarūpa yajña—By regulating the diet, suspension of the acts of inhalation and exhalation.

All these mean that all our actions should be performed

in the form of sacrifice and then our life will be successful. It means that we have to do nothing for ourselves. We have no affinity for actions and objects. We have relationship with God Who is devoid of actions and objects.



*Link:—The Lord, from the twenty-fourth verse to the first half of the thirtieth verse, described twelve kinds of sacrifice, while in the second half of the thirtieth verse, He eulogized strivers who perform sacrifices. Now, He in the next verse, explains what is gained, through their performance and what is lost through their non-performance.*

यज्ञशिष्टामृतभुजो यान्ति ब्रह्म सनातनम् ।

नायं लोकोऽस्त्ययज्ञस्य कुतोऽन्यः कुरुसत्तम ॥ ३१ ॥

yajñāśiṣṭāmṛtabhujo yānti brahma sanātanam  
nāyaṁ loko'styayajñasya kuto'nyaḥ kurusattama

Those who partake sacred remnants after a sacrifice (yajña), attain to the eternal Absolute; even this world is not pleasant for him who performs no sacrifice; how then can he have happiness in any other world, O Best of the Kurus (Arjuna)? 31

*Comment:—*

'Yajñāśiṣṭāmṛtabhujo yānti brahma sanātanam'—Those, who realize equanimity, having performed sacrifice i.e., having performed duty without any selfish motive, are said to have taken the remnants of the sacrifice. Such people, are released from all sins, and attain to the eternal Absolute (Gītā 3/13).

A man (the self), is eternal. It is because of his attachment to the perishable, that he believes that he dies. When he, having utilized his so-called possessions, for the welfare of the world, gets detached from them, he realizes the fact, that he is eternal.

When action is performed as duty i.e., for the welfare of others without any selfish motive, it becomes a sacrifice (yajña).