

Contents

About The Book	iii
1. Context and Relevance	1
2. Viṣāda-yoga	17
3. Sāṅkhya-yoga	23
4. The Meaning of Māyā or Illusoriness	55
5. Reincarnation and Plurality of the Soul	71
6. Karma-yoga	77
7. Yoga-buddhi and Samatva	93
8. Phalatyāga	111
9. When is Yoga Attained?	119
10. Sthita-prajñā and Sthita-dhī	129
11. Behaviour of the stable-minded	145
12. The world of the Self-Knower	157
Key to Pronunciation	167
Index of Ślokas	170

8

Phalatyāga

■ Renunciation of results – external or internal?

Renunciation of results – external or internal?

The sole object of resorting to *yoga-buddhi* is to perform all activities with efficiency, excellence and joyfulness. Such a Yogic pursuit is itself adequate to gain for the practitioner the supreme spiritual goal also simultaneously. This is what Krishna emphasizes in the last verse concluding his exposition of Karma-yoga.

कर्मजं बुद्धियुक्ता हि फलं त्यक्त्वा मनीषिणः ।
जन्मबन्धविनिर्मुक्ताः पदं गच्छन्त्यनामयम् ॥

karmajaṃ buddhi-yuktā hi phalaṃ tyaktvā manīṣiṇaḥ ।
janma-bandha-vinir-muktāḥ padaṃ gacchanty-anāmayam ॥
(2.51)

“The introspective people (*manīṣiṇaḥ*) reach the unassailable abode (*anāmayam padam*), freed from the bondage imposed by birth (*janma-banda-vinirmuktāḥ*). This is accomplished by abandoning the *phala* born out of *karma* (*karmajaṃ phalaṃ tyaktvā*), as their buddhi remains well-integrated (*buddhi-yuktā hi*)”.

This verse emphasizes three distinct points:

I. *Manīṣiṇaḥ*: *Manīṣī* means *manana-śeela* (introspective person). The karma yogis have thus to be *manīṣīs*. Only then their yoga pursuit will become meaningful and bring its destined spiritual outcome.

In karma yoga, the practitioner has to be extremely alert in doing *manana* or rumination, by which alone the mind gets more and more

exposed to the truths about the world and the life, about action and its consequence, about bondage and freedom. One may do any extent of karmas. It will still be mere performance. One's vision and depth will grow only when his buddhi and mind begin to introspect. This is what Krishna pinpointed when he stated earlier "the resolute nature of *buddhi* (*vyavasāyātmikā buddhiḥ*) is the fundamental factor in pursuing karma-yoga" (verse 2.41). Any extent of restatements on this account will not be an excess in bringing home the need for repeated introspection.

By manana one will come to know whether the karmas are wrong or their results wrong, or the trouble lies only in wrongly associating oneself with both, thereby getting agitated and afflicted. Arjuna came to the battlefield with years of preparation and resolve. The scene and confrontation he had been yearning for all those years were alone there before him. Yet he apprehended sin and danger, misery and misfortune in the whole event. The war was no more for him a propriety venture, a dharmic pursuit. It was, he felt, out and out sinful. And personal greed was the only motivation for fighting such a war, he said.

At the same time, were not his own teachers, especially the grandfather, standing right in front on the opposite camp, inviting his challenge and valour? How is it that they did not have any such apprehension, though their role was even more tragic and enigmatic? How did Arjuna's mind alone all of a sudden construe all the trouble and torment?

Krishna himself was his charioteer. The charioteer's position and responsibility in any war is very significant. He is the one to inspire the fighter, especially in very crucial moments of encounter. Thus the charioteer plays a vital role in whatever the actual fighter does. The events that were to follow would hence involve and concern both Krishna and Arjuna in equal measure. When Arjuna crumbled and cried, Krishna only smiled and stood erect. How could the same sight and same consequences bring mutually opposite reactions in Arjuna and Krishna who were equal participants in the venture?

This is ample proof to show how an introspecting mind looks at events and situations with unassailable stability and poise, while the non-introspecting mind suddenly confuses the whole vision and purpose to get lost in the very process!

In Yogavāsiṣṭha-rāmāyaṇa, Vasiṣṭhadeva tells Sri Rama how in the presence of enlightened persons, even the worst of crises strikes a sublime note:

शून्यमाकीर्णतामेति मृत्युरप्युत्सवायते ।
आपद्संपदिवाभाति विद्वज्जनसमागमे ॥

śūnyam-ākīrṇatām-eti mṛtyur-apy-utsavāyate ।
āpad-saṃpad-ivābhāti vidvaj-jana-samāgame ॥

Yogavāsiṣṭha-rāmāyaṇa (2.16.3)

The state of void (a scene of utter hopelessness) assumes a note of fullness (*pūrṇatā*) the instance of death becomes an occasion of festivity, even a situation of utmost danger turns to be one of felicity and prosperity, when the Wise one is present to interpret and evaluate the situation properly. In other words, by the right association and advice of the Knowers, even the most distressing situations reveal an auspicious and promotional note.

Right rumination or introspection is extremely essential for any one to live in this world. Mind knows only to think and bring memories. To study them, understand the implications and evaluate these with depth and insight is the task of buddhi. This buddhi has to be activated in all situations. Krishna is inspiring and arousing Arjuna's intelligence by presenting before him the truth of the Indestructible Soul, by proving the transitory nature of the body and all that it does and meets as outcomes. As a further note, Krishna takes Arjuna's mind away from the fleeting karmas and their ephemeral external results to the lasting inner enlightenment.

Human life is not meant merely to nourish the body and pursue bodily actions and their results. The understanding intelligence must dwell in the delights which wisdom alone can bring about. By knowledge

alone the mind can be raised above the bodily thoughts and plights to the exalted level of the Spirit and the everlasting spiritual sublimity.

2. By virtue of *manana*, what do the *manīṣis* accomplish? Krishna makes it clear that the phala born of karma is kept away by the effect of *manana*. Krishna uses the word *tyāga* (abandonment) for this 'keeping away'. *Tyāga* here actually means renunciation, the highest spiritual concept as well as attainment.

To be doing karma and at the same time to be abandoning its result, may look quite strange, if not absurd. If you do not perform any karma, then there will not be any question of a result at all. Where is then the need for abandoning the result? Only for one who is given to karma, the question of disturbance caused by its result and the need for getting relieved from it arises. And this is what has to be accomplished.

Here the point to be understood is that **the Bhagavadgītā does not state at any time that the objective results of karmas are to be abandoned or kept away**. Every karma has its specific result. Devoid of result, no karma can ever be thought of even by a foolish person. Look at Nature. Think of the whole lot of vegetation, the plant kingdoms. Everywhere growth and activity take place only to bring forth their specific outcome. To think of dissociating the karma from the objective result while doing karma or after doing it, is unnatural and impossible too.

Like a flower blossoming from a plant, a fruit growing from the flower, the objective external result is always an inevitable phase of the very course of karma. If action, karma, is the precedent factor, then its result, phala, is the succeeding one. Both together constitute the full range of the karma process. How can then any separation as such between the performance of karma and meeting its result or outcome be thought of at all?

Thus the question becomes very relevant: "*What is the renunciation of results Krishna speaks so emphatically about?*" The answer is quite clear, unmistakable. The objective external results of karmas are not what the Bhagavadgītā wants us to renounce. The

subjective results are implied here and they can be renounced in full, no doubt. By so renouncing, we do not lose anything, but gain instead something everlasting.

Objective results are external, material in nature. They belong to the object sphere. But the subjective results or impacts always belong to the doer, the *kartā*. These impacts are subject to alteration, improvement or even replacement. Mental responses can always be treated and altered. As explained earlier, depending upon the outlook and vision, attitude and evaluation, a karma or result will bring about an altogether different impact in the doer, as happened in the case of Arjuna himself. Arjuna, as he began to be receptive to Krishna's gospels, changed his point of view and assessment about the war and its outcome.

What is the subjective result with reference to which Krishna instructs the principle of *tyāga* or renunciation? This is the point which a yoga practitioner should think about clearly and ascertain. Herein lies the crux of yoga pursuit and its success.

Spiritual pursuit always belongs to the invisible part of our personality – to the mind, intelligence and heart. Only then it becomes spiritual. That is why the subjective result and its renunciation are brought forth here. Krishna has made this point amply clear in many places. In 18th chapter, the concluding one, the subject is discussed with a measure of finality. In verse 12, Krishna points out that any kind of karma at any time can have only three kinds of result: *iṣṭa*, *aniṣṭa* and *miśra*. It is these that are to be renounced. *Iṣṭa*, *aniṣṭa* and *miśra* do not belong to the object sphere. They relate to the subject part of man, the doer.

Actions are basically of three levels: physical actions, vocal actions and mental actions. In every level, there will be countless actions. Each of them is associated with its specific object result. So far as karma results are concerned, thus, there is no limit. But all these karmas and their respective results will together bring about in man's mind only three mental responses or outcomes: *iṣṭa*, favourable, *aniṣṭa*, unfavourable and *miśra*, a combination of the two.

Objective results are always aimed at while planning and pursuing karmas. But all these objective results constantly arouse in the mind three kinds of thought and outcome. Favourable result will bring pleasantness; unfavourable fruition will cause unpleasantness. Partly this and partly that will evoke a combined response.

If a student at the end of the year passes in examination and is promoted, the outcome is favourable for him and he feels happy. If a farmer does not get the expected yield, but has somewhat his expectation, it is a mixed response for him. Suppose his entire crop is attacked by pest and destroyed, then it is a critical unfavourable outcome, causing him utter sorrow.

The field of action may thus be anything. The actor may also be anybody. The action may be physical like walking or moving. It may instead be vocal like teaching a student or mental like meditating upon the Self.

The mental response in all these cases can only be favourable, unfavourable or mixed. These mental responses are the ones to be abandoned. With every karma well performed, one should feel equally fulfilled. Normally the karma will and must bring the desired result, subject to the possibilities we have already discussed. The fruition, non-fruition or otherwise should not in any way upset, dissuade or agitate the performer. **In wholehearted careful performance should lie one's contentment. In that reigns one's *yoga-buddhi* and the attunement and joy it inevitably generates.**

So, to keep away from the feelings of favour, disfavour and a combination of the two, is what is meant by *tyāga* or renunciation. For a *tyāgī*, says Krishna, the threefold affectation by results does not take place at all. The mind remains equally at home with every kind of result. When the favourable result occurs, he will proceed further with the task, making the result a new ground for the next phase of effort. If it is unfavourable, he will act upon it. If it is a combination, that will be the cause for a corrected attempt. The chain continues without any obstacle from the mind.

The objective result, in any case will remain external alone. It will not enter one's mind or buddhi. All that takes place is the response the objective result causes in the mind. Whether this response is one of favour, disfavour or a mixture, **such response is only to be assimilated and harmonised**. What else is to be done with any kind of reaction or response? **This assimilation is what is meant by renunciation of results.**

The emphasis that the renunciation is always of the *subjective impact* which the objective results produce, should not be missed. The Bhagavadgītā never **states that the objective results should not be aimed at, or that they should be abandoned**. If you work in a factory or office, and at the end of the month the salary becomes due, your employer has to disburse it to you and you alone. None other will be eligible for it and the employer too will not be free of his obligation unless the salary is paid to you and clearance obtained in the matter.

The Yogic orientation, enrichment always relates to the mind and buddhi of man, and their response and perception towards the result. The Bhagavadgītā does not intend to interfere with the sequence that exists between karma, its pursuit and the result it produces. It discusses only the attitude, evaluation and ultimate aim of all that is done and of the entire life governed by these.

Favour, disfavour and their mixture will be there only for those who do not know the art of renunciation (*atyāgī*) says Krishna, in the second half of verse 12 of the 18th chapter. For those who are imbued with the sense of renunciation, these reactions do not have any relevance or meaning at all. Thus the message of *yoga-buddhi* as different from the *phala-buddhi* becomes quite clear. It is for the seeker to reflect upon diligently on all these points so that the idea becomes doubtlessly clear to him and the yoga practice becomes irresistible and smooth.

3. The spiritual goal to be gained by the renunciation of the subjective effects caused by the karmas and their results is what Krishna refers to in the second half of the verse 2.51. The Yogic practitioners reach the unassailable abode (*anāmayaṃ padam*). The supreme spiritual goal is in the nature of an unassailability one reaches in the

sphere of his mind, heart and intelligence. In other words, the mind of the yogī feels so confident, easy and full that nothing in the way of karma or its result can upset it, making him lose his composure and fullness. In such a state of inner fullness, the fullness of Consciousness, all kinds of bondage, material as well as spiritual fetters, are completely broken. Krishna says, *janma bandha vinirmuktāḥ*. What does this mean?

All bondages follow one's birth. The birth itself, he says, is the first and the last bondage. The feeling of birth is caused only by the body. Body alone is born. Why should the Soul, on this account be held to be born? Let the body be there as a born product. Equally so, realize that the Soul manifesting the body is unborn. For the unborn Soul, what kind of *bandhana* can be there at all, due to the actions and consequences that follow because of embodiment?

Throughout the sāṅkhya portion, Krishna was emphasizing that the realization of the Soul will terminate all the questions and riddles caused by embodiment. It is in the same strain that he also concludes the exposition of karma-yoga. The *yoga-buddhi* sublimates the mind so deeply, completely and well, that no affliction of any kind assails the yogī. The unassailable abode is something that we have to reach while living here upon earth, before leaving the body.

This emphasis on realizing the supreme goal while living in the world, before the body falls, distinguishing the spiritual goal from any kind of post-death rewards like heaven or Brahmaloaka, is a very special exposition of Bhagavadgītā.

Verse 23 of the 5th chapter amply clarifies and confirms the same proposition. "*Prāk-śarīra-vimokṣaṇāt*" says Krishna there. Before leaving the body one must be able to sublimate the mind and make it free from the hold of passion and prejudice, the feelings of favour and disfavour. It is possible to do so. In fact, this is the only purpose of spiritual and Yogic pursuits.

