

REALISING WORK

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कर्मणो ह्यपि बोद्धव्यं बोद्धव्यं च विकर्मणः।
अकर्मणश्च बोद्धव्यं गहना कर्मणो गतिः॥

(गीता 4/17)

Prose Order

कर्मणः हि अपि बोद्धव्यम् विकर्मणः च बोद्धव्यम्
अकर्मणः च बोद्धव्यम् कर्मणः गतिः गहना॥

Word meaning: Karmana: type of work, form of work, Hi: undoubtedly, Api: also, Bodhavyam: should know, bodhavyam: worth knowing, cha: and, vikarmana: opposite work, prohibited work, form of sins, Akarmana: truth of false work, cha: also, bodhavyam: should be known, Karmana: element of work, Gati: movement, secret, Gahana: serious, depth.

Meaning: Lord Shri Krishna says to Arjuna, 'Oh Arjuna! Man should undoubtedly know the form of work and also of opposite work. He should know wrong work because the pace of work is very deep.'

Explanation: The meaning of the above verse is very simple and clear. It does not seem to have any depth. But it is not possible that the words of Krishna are meaningless. Therefore we are forced to understand its meaning. The word 'Karma' has been used thrice in this verse. The work was used singly at first, later it was used with opposite and wrong. Therefore there are three words, work, opposite work and wrong work. The man has to understand just these words. If the man understands these then the whole meaning will be clear automatically.

Work means work combined with mind. This work can be auspicious-inauspicious, religious-irreligious, good-bad, mental or physical. But Shri Krishna is talking about only the religious good works. Now the question arises as to what is religion? 'यतो अम्युदय निश्च्रेयस सिद्धिः स धर्मः' it means the works, which give good position to man and give spiritual progress along with worldly progress, in other words help in attaining liberation is called religion. However, progress can be seen with sinful works also. We see people progressing in

life through dishonesty, bribery, theft, dacoity, kidnapping, adulteration, illegal occupation of houses, shops, land etc, and crime. Not only that the pace of such progress is considerably quicker. But progress made with such illegal sources become obstacles in the path of liberation and hence irreligious. Therefore it has concluded that responsible works done as per classics is work. But this does not clarify the form of work. Actually it is necessary to understand the feeling behind the performance of a work, with what feeling the work has been done, which work has been done in which situation and in what manner. The form of work changes with the variance in feeling. For example, when a soldier kills an enemy in the battlefield, or kills a terrorist or a criminal, then he is performing the duty of warrior. However if the same soldier kills his colleague or officer then it is irreligious. Although the place and weapon to kill is the battleground but the form of work has changed due to change in the feeling. In the same way if the same soldier kills an innocent person due to vengeance or anger then also it is his irreligious work. Here both the place and feeling have changed. Therefore it is very important to understand the feeling, type, place and condition of work. Only a great knowledgeable person can tell which person should perform which work as per classics.

The second word is opposite work, the negative work as opposed to those mentioned in the classics like speaking lies, stealing, violence, indulging in extramarital affairs, consuming food that increases passion, gambling etc. are vices or sins.

There are some sins, which are extremely serious kind of sins like disrespecting religious gurus, indulging in sexual acts with the wife of teacher, similarly establishing sexual relations with daughter-in-law, or own daughter come under such serious sins. The person committing such sins gets results very soon and in the same birth. It has been said in classics –

‘त्रिभिर्वर्षैस्त्रिभिर्मासैस्त्रिभिः पक्षैस्त्रिभिर्दिनैः अत्युत्कटैः

पापपुण्यैरिहैव फलमश्नुते।'there is a story in Shrimadbhagwadgita. When king Nahush kicked sage Agastya and disrespected him then he turned into a snake due to the curse of the sage. This is a good example of the result of heinous sins. But this alone does not clarify the form of negative work. Some ignorant people consider virtue to be sin and vice versa. A poet, writer and intellectual person of a highest order consumes alcohol and tries to prove logically that the thoughts cannot be focused, or that creativity cannot be expressed without it. It is necessary for deep thinking. I had read somewhere that whenever the President of America delivered a speech after sexual act, which used to be his best, energetic and inspiring speeches. The person who accepts bribe says that if I have to work then I have to accept bribe. I can manage my household expenses with limited salary but how do I fill the pockets of my superiors and officers in order to save my job? You do not understand my compulsion. I am forced to work against my inner conscious due to this pressure. In this way many people consider sins to be virtuous responsibilities. On the other hand there is a person who considers worship, prayers, devotion, meditation as pretence, craziness or pomp and show (in one considers it to be sin). He says that it is better to do some creative work or enjoy life instead of wasting time in such tasks. There is a famous saying in this context, "Even Devils quote Bible in their favour." Here it needs to be clearly understood that a work can be responsible work for one person whereas negative work for another person. For instance, earning money for running a family, education of children, their marriage etc. is a work for a household man. Whereas the same work is a sin or negative work for an ascetic. Sexual act with own wife is a religious work for a married man but the other stages – celibacy, living in forest and asceticism are negative works for him. It means that a work can become negative work with the change in situation. Only a learned person can understand this deep meaning.

The third word is wrong work. Many people have written it as incapability. I do not agree with this because man cannot live without work. It is necessary to do the work whether it is auspicious-inauspicious, physical or mental. This is a human tendency. The man remains active every moment, every second. Had it been just for livelihood then why would the children of Tata, Birla, Ambani and other multi-millionaires been working? Several generations to come can live happily with just the interest received on the capital. But man had to do work due to his own nature. In a nutshell, the meaning of

wrong work cannot be incapability. Then what is the meaning of wrong work? According to me, wrong work means, work without desire, work without expectation, work done without thinking about the result. This is known as selfless work. A suspicion arises as to why should a man work without expecting results? The answer is that it is possible to do it. How? If I think remove ego while doing work and think that it is god's work, divine work and that he is making us work and he will only give results, I am just a source. I have to be sincere with full capacity and depending on my interest. The strength that is making us do the work and that which gives us strength is something else. Lord Krishna explains this fact in the second chapter.

योगस्थ कुरु कर्माणि संगं त्यक्त्वा धनञ्जय।

सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः समोभूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते॥ गीता-2/48॥

god gives results according to his own judgment. The result can be achieved in this birth or after 10, 20, 100 or thousands of years. Only god knows as to whose file will be processed at what time. However, it is definite that a person does get the results for good and bad deeds. It has been said, 'अवश्यमेव भोक्तव्यं कृतं कर्म शुभाशुभम्'। work cannot be completed without doing it. God gives unbiased judgment. He does not accept any recommendation or discount. According to Hitopadesh:

‘यस्माच्च येन च यथा च यदा च यच्च यावच्च यत्र च शुभाशुभमात्मकर्म तस्माच्च तेन च तथा च तदा च तच्च तावच्च तत्र च विधातुं वशादुपैति॥’

it means when a man performs some task with some purpose, source, type, time and duration, then that work controls the man to the same place, same duration, with the same purpose, same source and in the same manner.

The last sentence is 'गहना कर्मणो गतिः'।

It means the pace of work is very deep. An ordinary man cannot understand the secret of work. He only sees that many people do negative works but still enjoy happiness. on the other hand a person who does virtuous work is unhappy. Therefore it is meaningless to get involved in sins and virtues. A man should live according to the situation. Who knows about the next birth? But as has been mentioned earlier that every person gets the results of the work. The words, work, negative work and negative work have very minute differences, and it is necessary to understand the deep meaning. Every man cannot differentiate it. Many learned, intellectual and scholarly people also commit mistakes in understanding the meaning. Hence it is necessary to live in the proximity of learned people in order to understand the element of work thoroughly.