



Yagna or Sacrifice

Talks with Babaji

In Chapter 3 of the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna is saying to do your duty free from attachment for the sake of sacrifice only. So we have an individual ego, in a particular situation, with its own samskaras and self-interest, and yet we are encouraged to act without self-interest.

Binding and non-binding actions. Attachment is a feeling we create in the mind. A person gets married and gets attached to the other person. When they get divorced, the mind creates a feeling of separation. People remain the same; only the feeling changes. Selfless action without self-interest. The self-interest is not for obtaining any fruit for oneself, but the self-interest is only for the duty. The ego exists like the nirodha samskara exists, but that samskara burns itself.

So the samskara that is produced by the action performed without self-interest is self-eliminating in the same way nirodha samskara is?

Yes.

So the duty would also be the sense of being an instrument of God's will?

Yes, self-interest and universal interest. As soon as self-interest is weakened or removed, universal interest takes over.

Can you tell us how to transform action into yagna?

Yagna is self-dedicated activity. There is no self-interest. In the absence of self-interest, the ego merges in its fundamental nature. That merger is like offering in the fire of yagna. When it becomes our nature to perform selfless action, then the ego of individuality can't live for long.

Can you talk more about the meaning of self-dedicated activity?

Self-dedicated activity means selfless service. It is not forced by anyone. It is duty chosen by a person with complete devotion.

Does that imply a will and an intention?

Yes.

If everyone had the idea of sacrifice, would that change the environmental equilibrium qualitatively so people could live with less and not be so greedy?

If people live by self-dedicated action, then all problems will be solved. But, the ego has not worked out the bhoga (experience) yet. So the ego in a subtle way brings self-interest.

So this kind of sacrifice really means doing the right thing all the time?

Self-dedicated action. Like the sun, for example, which is giving heat and light continuously.

So when acting with the spirit of sacrifice, it's okay to receive the harvest because first there is an offering of the results of our action?

Yes. With that mental attitude, all works are performed. We offer things to God. God doesn't eat anything, doesn't need anything; then why do we offer? The offering affects the mind and accepts giving things away. Everything is only in the mind. You buy something; you own it; you sell it; you disown it. People get married and become wife and husband. They separate and that relation is gone.

It seems that everything we do has some self-interest and also some sacrifice involved. In the process of doing actions in which there is both, if we forget the sacrifice and use it only for our self-interest with no element of giving something back, then that is the sin. These verses speak of bringing our spiritual life into the world. Are these universal truths about how to live life while reducing the ego?

We are born. We start seeing the world. Now what should we do in the world? "The spirit of self-dedicated activity." That is what we have to do.

Most people are thinking of their own needs and not thinking of making a sacrifice for future generations.

One 80-year-old man was sowing a mango seed. A young man saw it. He went to the old man and said, "you are an old man. This mango tree will take ten years to grow and give fruit. By this time, you will be dead. You will not enjoy its fruits. So your actions are useless." The old man said, "You are right if I would be sowing it to enjoy its fruit. The mango tree's fruits will be for others."