

Śloka 21

निराशीर्यतचित्तात्मा त्यक्तसर्वपरिग्रहः ।
शारीरं केवलं कर्म कुर्वन्नाप्नोति किल्बिषम् ॥ २१ ॥

*nirāśīryatacittātmā tyaktasarvaparigrahaḥ
śārīraṁ kevalam karma kurvannāpnoti kilbiṣam*

निराशीः	<i>nirāśīḥ</i>	without hope
यतचित्तात्मा	<i>yatacittātmā</i>	one with the mind and self-controlled
त्यक्त	<i>tyakta</i>	abandoned
सर्व	<i>sarva</i>	all
परिग्रहः	<i>parigrahaḥ</i>	possession
शारीरम्	<i>śārīram</i>	bodily
केवलम्	<i>kevalam</i>	merely
कर्म	<i>karma</i>	action
कुर्वन्	<i>kurvan</i>	doing
न	<i>na</i>	not
आप्नोति	<i>āpnoti</i>	he obtains
किल्बिषम्	<i>kilbiṣam</i>	sin

21

Without hope, having controlled the mind and body, giving up all possessions, doing mere bodily action; he does not incur sin.

In this verse three qualities of a perfected yogi are given:

1) **Without hope** - This means one who does not depend on the external world, but remains content within.

2) **having controlled the mind and body** - This means one who has subdued the mind and senses so they do not function with a selfish motive.

3) **giving up all possessions** - This means one who is freed from all attachments.

The ego expresses itself in the form of desire and attachment. Hopes and expectations are forms of desire. A yogi who has removed desire has actually removed the desirer, which is the ego. The ego is the actor, enjoyer, and sufferer. The ego is created only when the Self identifies itself with the mind-body complex and its respective field of activity. This is when an idea of "I am" arises. A Self-realized yogi, whose ego identification with the mind-body complex is replaced by the identification with the pure Self, will neither hope for anything in the future, nor expect satisfaction in the present possessions.

The mind, body, and senses are uncontrolled when there is desire and attachment for objects. For a yogi whose ego is no longer a driving force behind desire and attachment, the mind, body, and senses are subdued automatically. The actions performed by the body of that yogi are inaction; that is, those actions do not carry any kind of memory because the egocentric identity with the body is not there.

Regardless of whether they are householders or renunciates, the sense of possessiveness cannot arise in those yogis who, in their minds, claim nothing as their own. When the ego, who is the enjoyer and possessor, is absent, the concept of possessing something for one's own use does not arise. All objects are seen as being for the world.

When hopes are renounced, when the mind and body are subdued, and when all possessions are relinquished, then there will be no place for the ego to exist. This is because these areas are the ego's field of activity. In the absence of the ego, the actions performed by a yogi for the sustenance of life do not incur any sin and the person remains free from the binding effects of actions.

Śloka 22

यदृच्छालाभसंतुष्टो द्वन्द्वतीतो विमत्सरः ।
समः सिद्धावसिद्धौ च कृत्वापि न निबध्यते ॥ २२ ॥

*yadṛcchālābhasaṁtuṣṭo dvandvātīto vimatsaraḥ
samaḥ siddhāvasiddhau ca kṛtvāpi na nibadhyate*

यदृच्छालाभ	<i>yadṛcchālābha</i>	what comes to him without effort
संतुष्टः	<i>santuṣṭaḥ</i>	content with
द्वन्द्वतीतः	<i>dvandvātītaḥ</i>	free from pairs of opposites
विमत्सरः	<i>vimatsaraḥ</i>	free from envy
समः	<i>samaḥ</i>	even-minded
सिद्धौ	<i>siddhau</i>	in success
असिद्धौ	<i>asiddhau</i>	in failure
च	<i>ca</i>	and
कृत्वा	<i>kṛtvā</i>	acting
अपि	<i>api</i>	even
न	<i>na</i>	not
निबध्यते	<i>nibadhyate</i>	is bound

Content with whatever comes without desiring, free from the pairs of opposites and envy, even-minded in success and failure, though acting, the yogi is not bound.

A yogi whose ego has ceased to be a driving force behind desire and attachment does not perform any action to achieve any definite fruit. The yogi feels quite content with whatever comes from the yogi's selfless actions.

The ego is the enjoyer and sufferer. Anything the ego enjoys is accepted by the mind and intellect, and anything that brings suffering to the ego is rejected by the mind and intellect. This indicates that the mind and intellect work for the ego. When the ego ceases to exist as the enjoyer and sufferer, the mind and intellect are no longer affected by the pairs of opposites and the yogi is freed from the effects of heat and cold, success and failure, good and bad, and joy and sorrow.

Likes and dislikes, affection and prejudice are in the mind. Competition and jealousy arise when the mind likes something and tries to achieve it. No envy or competition can arise in a selfless action because the ego is not there.

In success it is the ego that is inflated by feeling joy as a winner, while in failure it is the ego that is deflated by feeling miserable as a loser. When the ego is replaced by self-awareness, a yogi develops equanimity of the mind in both success and failure.

A yogi whose ego no longer exists is always **content, free from the pairs of opposites and envy**. Such a one who has attained equanimity of the mind, though acting, does not accumulate any sin and remains free from the binding effect of actions.

Śloka 23

गतसङ्गस्य मुक्तस्य ज्ञानावस्थितचेतसः ।
यज्ञायाचरतः कर्म समग्रं प्रविलीयते ॥ २३ ॥

*gataśaṅgasya muktasya jñānāvasthitacetasaḥ
yajñāyācarataḥ karma samagram praviliyate*

गतसङ्गस्य	<i>gataśaṅgasya</i>	one who is devoid of attachment
मुक्तस्य	<i>muktasya</i>	of the liberated
ज्ञान	<i>jñāna</i>	knowledge
अवस्थित	<i>avasthita</i>	established in
चेतसः	<i>cetasaḥ</i>	whose mind
यज्ञाय	<i>yajñāya</i>	for sacrifice
आचरतः	<i>ācarataḥ</i>	acting
कर्म	<i>karma</i>	action
समग्रम्	<i>samagram</i>	whole
प्रविलीयते	<i>praviliyate</i>	is dissolved

VERSE 23

Actions Dissolve in Performing Selfless Action

23

Of one who is free from attachment, who is liberated, whose mind is established in knowledge, who acts for the sake of sacrifice, all this action dissolves.

The path of **Karma Yoga**, which leads to the yogi's perfection, is explained in this verse.

one who is free from attachment - The relationship that manifests from any action, object, incident, situation, or person based on self-interest is called attachment. Attachment to the finite world is binding. A wise person is one whose attachment to the finite world is finished. The Self is unattached by nature, but when it is established in a body, its energy starts functioning through the mind, intellect, and senses. It is called the 'ego.' That ego is attached to the finite world and that attachment develops more and more when a yogi thinks, "I may accomplish all that I desire in the world." Hence the first step toward liberation is to be unattached.

who is liberated - Ego, attachment, and desire create bondage. The ego feels that desires are fulfilled by association with worldly objects. For that reason the ego clings to the world through the mind, intellect, and senses, and creates fetters that bind itself. The Self is ever free; it is the ego that is in bondage as a result of relating to the mortal world as "it is mine" or "it is for me." When a yogi understands that it is the ego that is trapped by its own self-created attachment, the yogi starts breaking the fetters of desire and attachment. In the absence of desire and attachment, the ego starts feeling liberated.

whose mind is established in knowledge - As long as the mind does not develop discriminative knowledge, complete non-attachment is not achieved. When a yogi centers the mind in correct discriminative knowledge, only then can the yogi distinguish what is eternal and what is non-eternal. Discriminative knowledge wipes out attachment to impermanent, fleeting objects, and a sense of complete liberation is achieved.

who acts for the sake of sacrifice, all this action dissolves - A yogi who has attained perfection by developing 1) non-attachment, 2) egolessness, and 3) right discrimination is completely liberated from all binding energies such as ignorance, egoism, attachment, aversion, and fear of death. Such a yogi functions with a spirit of Self-dedicated activity (*yajña*) without ego and egocentric desires. That yogi only serves creation.

Such actions of a Self-realized yogi do not leave any impressions in the mind of that yogi. As a result the actions dissolve away by themselves leaving no latent impressions in the mind.

Śloka 24

ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्म हविर्ब्रह्माग्नौ ब्रह्मणा हुतम् ।
ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्म समाधिना ॥ २४ ॥

*brahmārpaṇam brahma havirbrahmāgnau brahmaṇā hutam
brahmaiva tena gantavyam brahmakarma samādhinā*

ब्रह्मन्	<i>brahma</i>	Brahma
अर्पणम्	<i>arpaṇam</i>	the oblation
ब्रह्मन्	<i>brahma</i>	Brahma
हविः	<i>haviḥ</i>	the clarified butter (the offering)
ब्रह्माग्नौ	<i>brahmāgnau</i>	in the fire of Brahma
ब्रह्मणा	<i>brahmaṇā</i>	by Brahma
हुतम्	<i>hutam</i>	is offered
ब्रह्मन्	<i>brahma</i>	Brahma
एव	<i>eva</i>	only
तेन	<i>tena</i>	by him
गन्तव्यम्	<i>gantavyam</i>	shall be reached
ब्रह्म कर्म समाधिना	<i>brahma karma samādhina</i>	by one who is absorbed in action, which is Brahma

VERSE 24

*How Is It That the Actions of Such a Perfected Yogi Melt Away
Leaving No Latent Impressions?*

24

Brahma is the oblation; Brahma is the offering (clarified butter, etc.) constituting the oblations; by Brahma is the oblation poured into the fire of Brahma; Brahma verily shall be reached by one who always sees Brahma in all actions.

For a yogi who has attained Self-realization by **Karma Yoga**, all dualities end. That yogi sees the same Brahma everywhere and in everything. This verse explains how such a perfected yogi performs sacrifice (*yajña*). In performing sacrifice, four factors are considered: 1) the deity that is invoked, 2) the sacred fire, 3) the ingredients to be offered, and 4) the performer of the sacrifice.

A perfected yogi, in performing sacrifice, sees the same Brahma in **the oblation** (offering), the instruments used to pour the offerings, the ingredients that are offered, and the fire into which the offerings are poured. By keeping this mental attitude in the action of pouring the offerings, the yogi sees the same truth (Brahma) as the substratum of everything and does not create any delusory dualities.

All names, forms, and actions rise from Brahma. When this truth is known to a yogi all binding actions dissolve away. In all actions the yogi is simply invoking the truth or Brahma. There is no self-interest.