

VERSE 39

Arjuna Prays to the Lord to Dispel His Doubt

39

O Kṛṣṇa, dispel this doubt of mine completely, because it is not possible for anyone but You to dispel this doubt.

In the preceding verse Arjuna questioned the fate of a seeker who has fallen away from both knowledge of the Self and success in the world. A human incarnation in this world is for two purposes: *bhoga* (experience) and *apavarga* (Self-realization). *Bhoga*, or experience, includes *dharma* (virtuous action in the world), *artha* (the accumulation of wealth), and *kāma* (the fulfillment of virtuous desire). *Apavarga* includes *mokṣa* (liberation from all experience). Arjuna thinks a seeker who fails to achieve Self-realization is deprived of both *bhoga* (experience) and *apavarga* (liberation). This is because in the process of achieving liberation the seeker renounces all worldly enjoyments, and if the seeker does not achieve Self-realization, then the seeker is deprived of both worldly pleasure and spiritual liberation.

Arjuna prays to his Lord to dispel his doubt because he believes his teacher to be the remover of all doubts. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the only one who is capable of removing such doubts, because He is the omniscient Lord, and hence the only one who has that pure wisdom.

Śloka 40

श्री भगवानुवाच

पार्थ नैवेह नामुत्र विनाशस्तस्य विद्यते ।

न हि कल्याणकृत्कश्चिद् दुर्गतिं तात गच्छति ॥ ४० ॥

śrī bhagavānuvāca

pārtha naiveha nāmutra vināśastasya vidyate
na hi kalyāṇakṛtkaścid durgatiṁ tāta gacchati

श्री भगवान् उवाच	śrī bhagavān uvāca	the Lord said
पार्थ	pārtha	O Pārtha (Arjuna)
न	na	not
एव	eva	verily
इह	iha	here
न	na	not
अमुत्र	amutra	in the next world
विनाशः	vināśaḥ	destruction
तस्य	tasya	of him
विद्यते	vidyate	is
न	na	not
हि	hi	verily
कल्याणकृत्	kalyāṇakṛt	he who does good
कश्चित्	kaścit	anyone
दुर्गतिम्	durgatim	bad state or grief
तात	tāta	O My Son
गच्छति	gacchati	goes

VERSE 40

Destiny of One Who Strives For God-realization

40

The Lord said,

O Pārtha (Arjuna), there is no fall for him either here or hereafter, for none who strive for Self-realization ever, O My Son, ever comes to an evil destiny.

In this verse the Lord says that a seeker of Self-realization who is unable to achieve success never falls, either in this life or hereafter. The seeker will not lose the present state even after leaving the body, because the imprints of all the thoughts, actions, and knowledge that take place in one's day-to-day life create one's future and those imprints are passed on to future incarnations. In those future births the seeker will possess the same *samskāras* (prints in the mind) of faith in God, aim to attain Self-realization, and desire for spiritual practice. Therefore, the seeker will not be deprived of either purpose of life: enjoyments of the world or God-realization.

An unsuccessful striver cannot get lost like the rent cloud referred to in verse 38. Although the seeker may fail and be unable to achieve the aim in one lifetime, what has already been attained will not be lost; that attainment will be passed into the next incarnation and the yogi will begin striving again from the point where the yogi previously stopped or slipped away from the path.

The Lord addresses Arjuna as **O My Son** to express His great love. He reassures Arjuna that one who strives for Self-realization is never degraded to a lower state in the next incarnation.

Śloka 41

प्राप्य पुण्यकृतां लोकानुषित्वा शाश्वतीः समाः ।
शुचीनां श्रीमतां गेहे योगभ्रष्टोऽभिजायते ॥ ४१ ॥

*prāpya puṇyakṛtām lokān---uṣitvā śāśvatīḥ samāḥ
śucīnām śrīmatām gehe yogabhraṣṭo'bhijāyate*

प्राप्य	<i>prāpya</i>	having attained
पुण्यकृताम्	<i>puṇyakṛtām</i>	of the righteous
लोकान्	<i>lokān</i>	worlds
उषित्वा	<i>uṣitvā</i>	having dwelt
शाश्वति	<i>śāśvati</i>	everlasting, countless
समाः	<i>samāḥ</i>	years
शुचीनाम्	<i>śucīnām</i>	of the pure
श्रीमताम्	<i>śrīmatām</i>	of the wealthy
गेहे	<i>gehe</i>	in the house
योगभ्रष्टः	<i>yogabhraṣṭaḥ</i>	one fallen from yoga
अभिजायते	<i>abhijāyate</i>	is born

VERSE 41

Destiny of a Fallen Yogi

41

Having attained the world of the righteous and having lived there for countless years, one who has fallen from yoga is reborn in the house of the pious and wealthy.

Actions are of two kinds: virtuous action and non-virtuous action. Virtuous actions are those performed in a spirit of devotion to God. The fruit of virtuous action is peace, happiness, and dispassion for the world. Non-virtuous actions are those performed with worldly desires. The fruit of non-virtuous action is restlessness, unhappiness, greed, and discontent caused by attachment to the world. In the path of yoga a seeker develops virtuous action and shuns non-virtuous action.

A seeker who has practiced yoga and lived a disciplined life may not be able to achieve perfection before death. This could be due to restlessness of the mind, worldly attachment, physical sickness, or a variety of other causes. Such a one is called **fallen from yoga**. After leaving the body, a yogi who could not achieve complete Self-realization but lived a life in complete devotion to God and worshipped God with desire for heavenly enjoyment, goes to planes of consciousness of heavenly enjoyments to which only virtuous seekers are entitled.

Such yogis who strive for Self-realization stay in those heavenly regions for countless years because of the purity of their minds. Due to their *samskāras* of non-attachment to sense objects, the celestial enjoyments do not create any bondage for them. Therefore they stay in those regions as long as the desire for Self-realization remains strong. After exhausting those *samskāras* they take birth again in this world in the **house of pious** and prosperous parents. Their rebirth in such a family is conducive to attaining Self-realization because the purity of the parents activates the *samskāras* of virtuous action in that fallen yogi. The wealth and prosperity of the household do not cause any attachment for that yogi because by being born into that family the *samskāra* of non-attachment also becomes active.

Desire for worldly pleasure and desire for heavenly enjoyments are both *bhoga* (experience). They have a limit. When desire for worldly pleasure ends, an aspirant desires heavenly enjoyments and achieves them. All human desires, including heavenly desires, need to be fulfilled at one time or another. Liberation is achieved when all kinds of desires, including heavenly desires, are worked out.

The essence of this verse is that a yogi who follows a spiritual path, but who leaves the body before attaining complete Self-realization, will never fall to lower stages. Instead that yogi will go on progressing in each birth until final liberation is achieved.

Śloka 42

अथवा योगिनामेव कुले भवति धीमताम् ।
एतद्धि दुर्लभतरं लोके जन्म यदीदृशम् ॥ ४२ ॥

*athavā yogināmeva kule bhavati dhīmatām
etaddhi durlabhataram loke janma yadīdṛśam*

अथवा	<i>athavā</i>	or
योगिनाम्	<i>yoginām</i>	of yoga
एव	<i>eva</i>	even
कुले	<i>kule</i>	in the family
भवति	<i>bhavati</i>	is born
धीमताम्	<i>dhīmatām</i>	of the wise
एतत्	<i>etat</i>	this
हि	<i>hi</i>	verily
दुर्लभतरम्	<i>durlabhataram</i>	very difficult
लोके	<i>loke</i>	in the world
जन्म	<i>janma</i>	birth
यत्	<i>yat</i>	which
ईदृशम्	<i>īdṛśam</i>	like this

VERSE 42

Destiny of an Advanced Yogi Who is Free From Attachment

42

Or, that one is even born in the family of wise yogis; verily a birth like this is very difficult to obtain in this world.

Among those yogis who leave the body before attaining complete Self-realization are those who possess dispassion and achieve a higher state in meditation. They do not go to heavenly regions where all enjoyments are available to exhaust their *samskāras* of enjoyment, but immediately take rebirth **in the family of wise yogis** where they get an atmosphere conducive to their spiritual enlightenment.

In a family of wise yogis there are spiritual associations and spiritual teachings readily available. A yogi born into such a situation will have the *samskāras* to attain Self-realization activated right away. A seed that gets the right soil, right climate, and proper care germinates quickly and becomes a tree. It is the same for a reborn yogi who in a previous birth had dispassion and attained a higher stage in yoga. Due to birth in the family of wise yogis, that one's *samskāras* for Self-realization start developing right away.

Only those yogis who achieved dispassion and attained a high state in meditation are reborn in such a spiritual environment. For others it is **very difficult** to take rebirth in the family of wise yogis.

Śloka 43

तत्र तं बुद्धिसंयोगं लभते पौर्वदेहिकम् ।
यतते च ततो भूयः संसिद्धौ कुरुनन्दन ॥ ४३ ॥

*tatra taṁ buddhisamyogaṁ labhate paurvadehikam
yatate ca tato bhūyaḥ saṁsiddhau kurunandana*

तत्र	<i>tatra</i>	there
तम्	<i>taṁ</i>	him
बुद्धि संयोगम्	<i>buddhi samyogam</i>	union with knowledge
लभते	<i>labhate</i>	he obtains
पौर्वदेहिकम्	<i>paurvadehikam</i>	acquired in a former body
यतते	<i>yatate</i>	strives
च	<i>ca</i>	and
ततः	<i>tataḥ</i>	than that
भूयः	<i>bhūyaḥ</i>	more
संसिद्धौ	<i>saṁsiddhau</i>	for perfection
कुरुनन्दन	<i>kurunandana</i>	O Son of Kurus (Arjuna)

VERSE 43

How the Conducive Environment Affects the Fallen Yogi

43

There, he regains the knowledge acquired in the previous birth and strives more than before for perfection, O Son of Kurus (Arjuna).

What happens when the yogi who had attained equanimity, dispassion, and a higher state of meditation in a previous life takes birth in the house of wise yogis? Will the yogi start practice all over again? The answer is no. That environment is conducive to the yogi's spiritual practice, and that yogi naturally becomes united with the spiritual insight achieved in the previous birth. Yogis born in such an environment progress very quickly in their spiritual quest. For that yogi the spiritual knowledge acquired in the previous life will simply be revived in the present birth and the yogi will start rapidly assimilating higher knowledge and strive even harder than before to attain complete realization.

Śloka 44

पूर्वाभ्यासेन तेनैव हियते ह्यवशोऽपि सः ।
जिज्ञासुरपि योगस्य शब्दब्रह्मातिवर्तते ॥ ४४ ॥

*pūrvābhyāseṇa tenaiva hriyate hyavaśo'pi saḥ
jijñāsuraḥ pi yogasya śabdabrahmātivartate*

पूर्वाभ्यासेन	<i>pūrvābhyāseṇa</i>	former practice
तेन	<i>tena</i>	by that
एव	<i>eva</i>	verily
हियते	<i>hriyate</i>	is born
हि	<i>hi</i>	indeed
अवशः	<i>avaśaḥ</i>	helpless, unwillingly
अपि	<i>api</i>	even
सः	<i>saḥ</i>	he
जिज्ञासुः	<i>jijñāsuḥ</i>	he who wishes to know yoga
अपि	<i>api</i>	even
योगस्य	<i>yogasya</i>	of yoga
शब्दब्रह्म	<i>śabdabrahma</i>	Brahma in the form of sound (the Vedas)
अतिवर्तते	<i>ativartate</i>	goes beyond

VERSE 44

Uniting Insight from a Previous Birth in the Present Birth

44

By that very former practice he is born, though unwilling; even he, who merely wishes to know of yoga, goes beyond Brahma of sound.

The previous verse stated that a fallen yogi who takes birth in the house of a wise yogi lives in a spiritual environment that is conducive to yogic practices. Such a one, by force of attainment of a higher state of meditation in the previous birth, goes on progressing on the path of yoga by honest and sincere effort and achieves Self-realization.

Verse 41 told of other fallen yogis who take birth in rich and pious families by virtue of having lived a spiritual and disciplined life, and having engaged themselves in the worship of God in the past birth. Such yogis also continue their yogic practices in their present birth. Due to the latencies of their yogic practices in the past life, their minds do not get attached to material wealth or sensuous life.

This verse says that even if the yogi does become charmed by a sensuous life and is unwilling to voluntarily follow the yogic path, that yogi will be compelled to adopt the yogic path. This will occur by the force of the yogic latencies that will arise when the latencies of a sensuous life are exhausted. At such time the yogic latencies will overpower those of sensuous living.

Even if such a one simply becomes an inquirer into yoga in whom the desire to know God (Brahma) is awakened, that one will not become attracted to the fruits of rituals which are promised by the **Vedas**. Instead that inquirer will go beyond all Vedic ritual and strive to attain God alone.

If such is the case for an inquirer in whom the desire to know God is kindled, and that one only strives to attain God, then how could one who has spent entire previous lives, from birth to birth, in the practice of self-control, self-study, and meditation have any attraction for material wealth or sensual enjoyment in this particular life? When such a fallen yogi is reborn, that yogi naturally will be drawn to a secluded environment and the quietude of a peaceful, meditative life. Such a yogi will lead a disciplined yogic existence and remains engaged in striving for Self-realization. No worldly wealth, prosperity, or enjoyment will be able to divert such a one from the path to the divine.

The essence of this verse is that no effort in seeking Self-realization ever goes in vain. Any effort on the path to the divine will bring a positive result, sooner or later.

Śloka 45

प्रयत्नाद्यतमानस्तु योगी संशुद्धकिल्बिषः ।
अनेकजन्मसंसिद्धस्ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥ ४५ ॥

*prayatnādyatamānastu yogī saṁśuddhakilbiṣaḥ
anekajanmasaṁsiddhastato yāti parām gatim*

प्रयत्नात्	<i>prayatnāt</i>	with assiduity
यतमानः	<i>yatamānaḥ</i>	striving
तु	<i>tu</i>	but
योगी	<i>yogī</i>	the yogi
संशुद्ध किल्बिषः	<i>saṁśuddha kilbiṣaḥ</i>	purified through many births
अनेकजन्मसंसिद्धः	<i>aneka janma saṁsiddhaḥ</i>	perfected through many births
ततः	<i>tataḥ</i>	then
याति	<i>yāti</i>	reaches
पराम्	<i>parām</i>	the highest
गतिम्	<i>gatim</i>	path