

## Brief summary for Tuesday 29th March (4.21 - 4.22 session)

We must thank all our teachers for their contribution to what has been written below. These are things we have learned and heard from other gracious souls whose teachings are expressed in our own words/understanding.

If you missed part 51, [check out the notes here.](#)

You can find [all the previous notes here.](#)

Last week we heard Krishna describing someone seeking perfection on the path of niskama-karma yoga and the nature of their attitude toward action that stops them becoming implicated in karma even while acting in the world. This week we look at verses that are generally understood to be describing someone who has perfected that process.

In verse 4.21 Krishna says that such a person has developed spiritual intelligence and has no sense of proprietorship, that is, no desire for acquiring and owning anything, knowing that actually they don't anyway. Having such an attitude, even while engaged in action, such as to sustain the body, there is no reaction for them, neither pious or impious. Free from desire means having no attachment to the fruits of action.

Remember, Krishna has been speaking about great kings, and in the times Arjuna is living, great kings would be engaged in elaborate rituals and public sacrificial worship for material prosperity. Krishna has said that when someone is in knowledge and free from material desire, even if they engage in those kinds of activities, then they are not implicated in karma.

If this is true for someone engaged in worldly activities, how much more it must be true for someone only acting for the maintenance of their body. For example, great sages living in the forest, although generally are not doing

very much but rather are engaged in their meditation, still have to break from that to beg alms for example. But this type of action does not bind the sage.

Krishna is explaining that when one is completely free from material desire, they are not tainted by performing natural functions that are needed to keep the body alive and healthy. The fact they have renounced desire and hankerings, and also controlled their senses, exempts them from any reaction that generally comes along with action in this world.

Krishna points out that they are controlled in citta-atma, both mind and intelligence or body. Atma generally refers to gross body. Krishna is also hinting here to the method of renouncing desire. By restraining one's mind and body by the consciousness which Krishna also discussed at the end of the third chapter.

If such a person who has mastered this begs in charity in the classical times Krishna is speaking (where begging is the norm for renunciate), even if they take charity from a sinful person, they don't get an impious reaction themselves. Accepting donations from dishonest persons to maintain their body won't implicate them. This connects to the point Krishna made regarding vikarma; there is no reaction.

Similarly they won't receive any piety from pious acts of charity. They aren't accumulating objects of the senses, they are just maintaining their body. The person has the self as their primary objective and so have no senses of ownership in relation to the material energy.

A person engaged in action for the body alone does not get tied to the cycle of samsara. One can look at this referring to someone situated in jnana or the cultivation of self knowledge, performing natural activities suitable for such a person like begging alms from householders to maintain their existence. But also, in line with how Krishna has been speaking about kings, if the internal focus is in a similar way, even while setting the example, they don't need to resort to Jnana yoga after completing karma

yoga, but rather can remain situated in their position and there will be no reactions connected due to the qualities mentioned here by Krishna: freedom from desire for the result, no sense of proprietorship over possessions, having controlled mind, intelligence and senses.

As mentioned, although generally this is referring to those who have renounced the world, it also applies for those advanced in bhakti. Srila Prabhupada points out in his purport:

**A Krishna conscious person does not expect good or bad results in his activities. His mind and intelligence are fully controlled. He knows that because he is part and parcel of the Supreme, the part played by him, as a part and parcel of the whole, is not his own activity but is only being done through him by the Supreme. When the hand moves, it does not move out of its own accord, but by the endeavor of the whole body. A Krishna conscious person is always dovetailed with the supreme desire, for he has no desire for personal sense gratification. He moves exactly like a part of a machine. As a machine part requires oiling and cleaning for maintenance, so a Krishna conscious man maintains himself by his work just to remain fit for action in the transcendental loving service of the Lord. He is therefore immune to all the reactions of his endeavors.**

As we make advancement, we will be more and more greedy for Krishna's service and less concerned with acquirement beyond our bodily needs. A person at that place gives no importance to anything outside their service and understands they do not really perform actions. They have the mind and intelligence fully controlled, there is freedom from a sense of proprietorship and only the bare necessities are desired, just as is the case with the perfected niskama-karma-yogi.

In verse 4.22, the qualities of such a perfected person are further described. Such a person is content with whatever comes by itself, they are not overwhelmed by duality based on pleasure and pain or attachment and hatred, and are free from envy. They are steady in mind in both success

and failure, meaning they are neither elated nor dejected. This type of person is never bound by karmic reactions.

In relation to what we spoke about in the last verse, genuine renunciates are allowed to collect alms and minimally clothe themselves. They are satisfied with whatever comes.

Generally a renunciate on the path of jnana, who has the kind of self knowledge acquired through niskama-karma-yoga, has no perception of dualities such as heat and cold when they are deep in their meditation and experiencing samadhi. At times they come out of this state to beg alms though and so they may become aware of the dualities of the world but they are not disturbed by them and keep a steady mind even while acting in the world.

Srila Prabhupada points out in his purport:

**The duality of the material world is felt in terms of heat and cold, or misery and happiness. A Krsna conscious person is above duality because he does not hesitate to act in any way for the satisfaction of Krsna. Therefore he is steady both in success and in failure. These signs are visible when one is fully in transcendental knowledge.**

A person on this platform is content with what life brings for their maintenance and endures cold, heat and other experiences without being affected. They patiently endure dualities, including happiness and disappointment.

Another related point is that such a person, due to not being affected by dualities, is not envious of anyone. Vimatsara means freedom from matsarya or envy. Envy is the inability to tolerate the excellence of another. Whether they themselves have success or failure, they remain steady or equipoised. They understand karma is the cause of success and failure for anyone and so they are free from ill-will towards others.

Due to these attitudes, such a person isn't bound by karma even while engaged in action, even if they aren't exclusively practicing Jnana Yoga but are engaged in action in the way Krishna has been describing.

So we see four main qualities of such a person in this verse:

1. Self-satisfaction – Satisfied with whatever comes by providence with no over-endeavor
2. Freedom from duality – nothing can hamper their practice or service
3. Steadiness – Steady in success and failure
4. Freedom from envy

The method for transcending all dualities is given here too: practicing being equipoised in all situations. The verse gives the keys to being free from reactions. By performing one's activities with this kind of mindset, reactions to bodily actions will be neutralized.

We see this is built into the process of surrender into bhakti. We want to practice being content with whatever comes, knowing what is behind it. If we can be satisfied without desire or motivation for more than we need then many problems in life will be solved automatically. The more we practice this, the more we will be tranquil in mind whether we get something or do not get something or a certain outcome to a situation.

If we practice making Krishna the central focus of our activities then selfish motive has to decrease automatically as we are acting for the pleasure of someone else. The more we make advancement, the more we learn about Krishna and deepen our relationship with Him, the more we will see these qualities become present in ourselves gradually.

At higher stages, these qualities are all there naturally. There are even examples of devotees not even begging as they fully depend on Krishna.

Krishna looks on these kinds of devotees with great affection and so always provides their needs.

The devotee's mind can be free from the dualities of the material world as they see Krishna's hand in everything that happens. Unlike the conditioned soul, they don't see good and bad, or yearn for pleasure and try to avoid distress. They know Krishna is one's protector, one of the 6 limbs of Saranagati (surrender) and can place their welfare fully in His hands, accepting whatever gain comes of its own accord, working for the welfare of all beings.

A nice example of a devotee on this level is Sripada Madhavendra Puri, the guru of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's guru (Isvara Puri). Madhavendra Puri neither worked nor begged for his food. He ate only when someone was prompted by Krishna from within to offer him food. Especially when traveling in Vrindavana, Madhavendra Puri wouldn't even beg. Krishna was so moved by the heart of Madhavendra Puri, by his affection, detachment and faith, that once when Madhavendra Puri was sitting near Govardhana Hill at Govinda-kund, Krishna personally brought him milk. It is said that the devotional consciousness of such a materially detached, spiritually attached soul is so sweet that it even attracts Krishna.

So we want to walk toward becoming that type of devotee that attracts Krishna and Krishna will share more how one can do that later in the Gita.

Next time we will study verses 4.23 - 4.24 where Krishna will introduce yajna or sacrifice, then in the verses that follow that Krishna will expand on these things, because it is sacrifice that brings one to this realized knowledge in the first place.