



## Indriya:rdhe:shu Vairagyam



- Sanila

Meaning: Renunciation of the objects of sense gratification

The Katha Upanishad states that the mortal becomes immortal when all the desires that surge in the heart are renounced. Renunciation is actually renouncing hopes and aspirations. Vasishta Yogi says "when one feels the presence of Lord Supreme in all appearances and modifications and when one abandons the delusions of duality, that is regarded as surrender to Lord, or offering of self and all to God". Surrender to God is renunciation.

When we are devoid of true Spiritual Bliss we have nobody to blame but ourselves. In the world today most of us are constantly in pursuit of a mere illusion which we consider and label as happiness. How do our Sages attain this state of vairagyam and experience eternal bliss? In chapter 5 verse 3 of the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna states

"One who neither hates nor desires the fruits of activities is known to be always renounced. Such a person, liberated from all dualities, easily overcomes material bondage and is completely liberated, O mighty-armed Arjuna" A question in our mind then would be, can a soul give up all activities? For this question Lord Krishna's response in Chapter 18 verse 11 of the Bhagavad Gita

"It is not possible for an embodied soul to give up all activities. But he who renounces the results of all activity is actually renounced".

For renunciation there are three major stages that have been distinguished. The first one is the outward renunciation, when a man or a woman leaves the household life, to become a monk or a nun. Outward renunciation has no intrinsic value, and may theoretically be dispensed with, but there is no doubt that it does make true renunciation easier. Genuine or true renunciation is a matter

of the heart, mind and soul rather than the body. Renouncing the objects of self-gratification which are desires and aversions within us, rather than of the world of "objects" without is renunciation. Finally there is the ultimate renunciation, which is renouncing one's "self" in its entirety, which consequently results in the destruction of all ill.

In Chapter 18 of the Gita, verses 7 to 9 Lord Krishna says that prescribed duties should not be renounced by anyone. When by illusion one gives up their prescribed duties such renunciation is said to be in the mode of ignorance. Anyone who gives up prescribed duties as troublesome or out of fear is said to be in the mode of passion. Such actions do not lead to the elevation of renunciation. However when one does everything as a matter of duty and gives up attachment to the results of the work, his renunciation is said to be in the mode of goodness.

Sage Vasistha says that as long as one believes in objective existence then desire will arise. Recognition of "objects" give rise to desire and non-recognition of objects ends desire. When desire ends, the jiva drops its self-limitation. The desire that arises in the course of one's natural functions, devoid of craving is that of a liberated sage. When all ego-based notions have ceased in one's heart, the attention that is directed naturally is also the nature of the liberated sage.

When one does a brief analysis on this subject we can safely conclude that the self and the world are interdependent – our emotional responses to the world strengthening our sense of self, and our sense of self causing the illusory appearance of a permanent and substantial world with objective qualities of desirability and undesirability. Hence, renunciation of the world and of the self are two aspects of the same thing and what we see as the world may, on deeper



analysis, be found present within ourselves. Sage Patanjali says that non-attachment should never be thought of as austerity, a kind of self-torture, something grim and painful for as a religious aspirant progresses and gains increasing self-mastery he will see that he is renouncing nothing that he really needs. He is merely freeing himself from imaginary needs and desires.

In the Patanjali Yoga Sutras, the Sage says that the simplest way to acquire non-attachment to the desires, objects and ambitions of this world is to cultivate attachment to the highest object we can conceive of which is God Himself. Through the Divine service and love the non-attachment develops naturally. One does not become indifferent to other people or to work but the love for others is included in the love for God and it ceases to be exclusive and possessive. According to the Vedas the true Sannyasin stands on the head of the Vedas for he is free from sects, religion, prophets and scriptures. He is the visible God on earth and he carries the banner of peace, freedom and Blessedness. The Kattha Upanishad informs us that when all desires that surge in the heart are renounced, the mortal becomes immortal. Similarly the Chhando:gya Upanishad instructs us that a person is what his deep desire is – it is the deepest desire in this life that shapes the life to come and it advises us to direct our deepest desire to realize the Self.

Through renunciation of objects of self-gratification an enlightened one lives a non-volitional life engaging himself spontaneously in appropriate action. ***He lives for the sake of others, with a heart full of compassion for all beings. He lives in a state of realization of the truth even while he engages himself in diverse activities. In diversity he experiences unity. He is silent in useless arguments, he is deaf to useless talk, he is a corpse in relation to unrighteous actions, he is brilliant in exposing what is auspicious and in a moment he reveals the greatest truth.*** All this is very natural to a wise man. He

does not strive to acquire these qualities. As long as there is a body there will be pain and pleasure but the wise are not attached to either. A person who has kept his mind free of delusion and who has purified it with the help of the Guru's mantra merges in Supreme Self. A person who has become "Supreme" conscious, after getting rid of material desires, pervades the expanse of the three worlds through the form of the Self even though he is at one place. Thus, it has been said that a true Sannyasin's consciousness is more expansive than space.

An interesting statement to ponder on which is related to renunciation and it is not a metaphysical teaching is: "All that is subject to arising is subject to ceasing". It is not about the ultimate reality – the deathless reality, but if we can understand and know that all that is subject to arising is subject to ceasing, then we can realize the ultimate reality and the deathless immortal truths. This is a skilful means to the ultimate realization. This statement is not a metaphysical one but one that takes us to the metaphysical realization. The Chha:ndo:gya Upanishad states "just as rivers flow from east to west to merge with the one sea, forgetting that they were ever separate rivers, so all beings lose their separateness when they eventually merge into the Pure Being.

To summarize the steps the clear path for renunciation begins with "Sravana" which is an eagerness to listen to the glories of God. Then comes "Kirtana" when the devotee takes delight in singing the praises of God, followed by "Sparsa" which is the oneness or solidarity that he feels when he prostrates at the Lotus feet since, all the spiritual influences flow from the Lotus feet of God. Gradually the mind directs the five senses towards God. The next stage is the "Buddhi bha:va" wherein the devotee starts service towards mankind by study and cognition of the truths explained in the Scriptures with no desires for objects or other results in any form. Finally, then comes "Ahambhava" which is entire self-renunciation or complete surrender to God.

