

The Devotee's Bhagavad Gita
by Ed Sharrow, Rishi

Chapter III, Verse 19

Sri Nerode's Translation:

19

Therefore, do then always perform action that comes as duty, with impersonalness; for by the performance of duty in an impersonal way man mounts to the highest bliss.

Helpful Translation:

Live in the moment by acting in harmony with the situation and not with personal desire. Selfless actions lead to Bliss.

Commentary:

Embrace whatever life presents with a positive attitude and completely focused on the moment.

A common argument against "living in the moment" is that goals require articulation and a plan of action. The ego says, "If I only focus on the moment, then I'll end up with a string of moments and nothing to show for my effort."

The Bhagavad Gita counsels against this intellectual rationalization that the worldly person should have goals and should follow a plan of action. The sentiment expressed in this verse is that creation already has a plan that has been set into motion. A human has one choice to make, either cooperate with the universal plan selflessly, or block it with personal motivations. In the next verse, King Janaka - a sage freed from limitations by cooperating with the universal plan - is offered as an example of one person who successfully chose to live in the moment and achieved liberated consciousness.

One should always perform each action to the best of one's ability right now.

The advanced spiritual person lives in the moment. Any goal has already been completed. Any plan has already been made and executed. The body must just perform the task which is required in the relative moment.

The freed soul has no personal motives so the best that can be done is to “be here now” - completely engaged in the action at hand.

Only the lowest form of human or the mentally deficient, who have no active conscience, are unable to discern the difference between wasting time and performing what needs to be done. In other verses the Gita extols all humans to act, so staying at home in bed does not relieve one from the responsibilities of the world. Nor does running away to live in a cave without human contact. If one feels overwhelmed by multiple duties presenting at the same time, follow the inner guide, one’s conscience, to prioritize what must be done first and which actions can wait. A child may cry incessantly for parental attention, but if the parent always chooses to play versus performing essential duties like preparing food to eat, then both will starve.

No matter one’s circumstance, the best way to immediately improve the current situation is to concentrate on the task at hand. Enthusiasm and attention to do one’s best right now improves life.

Easter Eggs:

Easter Eggs (hidden references to deeper meanings) in the original version of this this verse include:

purusa - man, son of Manu, mankind

param - beyond human knowledge

©Ed Sharrow