Sloka 48  (Chapter 2)

YOGASTHAHA KURU KARMANI SANGAM TYAKTVA DHANANJAYA
SIDDHY-ASIDDHOH SAMO' BHootVA SAMATVAM YOGAM UCHYATE

O Arjuna, do your work, be steadfast in yoga, giving up all attachment, unmindful of success or failure. Such equanimity of the mind is "Yoga."

In continuation of the theme from the previous sloka, we now are given instructions about the work and the results from the same. After having been told about "Karmanye vadhikarasthe", the Lord says: "Do the work with total concentration. The results will follow the actions." We will succeed in some actions and it makes us feel happy. Some actions do fail and we feel depressed. Balance of mind on facing such results and continuing to fulfil the duties to the family and society is the summary of this sloka.

Yogasthaha kuru karmani:
Do your work, be steadfast in yoga. Yoga in this context refers to "Karma Yoga" or "Yoga of right action."

Whatever action we conduct, must be carried out with total 100% concentration on the same. There should not be any disturbances from the world around. Work has to become an act of worship.

The sense organs are bound to bring in a number of impulses that can easily distract from the work ahead. We do instruct our children to concentrate on the road while walking to the school. We are expected to take care of the traffic around when we are driving a motor vehicle. Failure by the child to take note of oncoming traffic would result in accident. Similarly, failure on our part to concentrate on driving can easily end up in nasty accident.

We not only have to do our work but also do the same with full concentration and not get distracted. This is the message of the first quarter of this sloka.

Sangam tyaktva:
Giving up all attachments.
Attachment to the results of actions,
Attachment to the work itself,
Attachment to the distractions that come during the work,
All should be given up.

This is not easy. If we accept that what we are doing is God’s work and as servants of the Lord, it becomes easier.

It is very difficult to accept the statement "do not be attached to the work." Of course it is important that we do perform the various duties in life, both personal and professional. What is needed is that we should not be feeling proud of our position we hold in society and the work we do in relation to it. By god’s grace we got to where we are and what we do should be only as His servants. The work then becomes a "duty", an act of worship.

The sense organs and the mind are very powerful. We, the humans, are blessed to have got the buddhi which is the reasoning capacity. Even while working, the sense organs will be receiving impulses from the surroundings. Some of those might be strong enough to distract us and take us away from the work in progress. Without our knowledge we get attached to the new
impulses received. Dropping of attachments to the new impulses while conducting any work with total concentration is the meaning for the word "Sangam tyaktva."

While driving, momentarily the mind gets distracted on something else and we do lose concentration on the road ahead. It is a fairly common experience for most of us. It is easy to let the mind wander off into its dream world. The Lord is telling us that we must not let the mind get distracted by the impulses brought in by the sense organs and should not let it go into the treasure house of memories. Attachment easily develops to these impulses/thoughts which reduce the efficiency of work and which could easily cause harm.

Attachment could also be to the fruits of actions. This we have discussed fully in the previous sloka.

Siddhy-asiddhyoh samó bhootva:
Unmindful of success or failure.

Every action ends in a result. We could succeed or fail in the work we conduct. What we need to do is to prepare ourselves fully to the work. Let us also clear all doubts concerning the work.

The student wishing to sit for exams and get a degree has to concentrate on the studies first. He should clarify the doubts that crop up in the mind every so often. With the knowledge gained in the classroom and by the revision work, he has to sit for exams. While writing the answers in the examinations he should not be thinking of success in exams and the benefits from the same. He should also not worry about failure.

As we have discussed before, putting the best efforts is our job. The results are His grace.

The results depend on two issues:
a) the efforts put in conduct of the work and
b) the result of actions conducted in the past including past births.

To worry about the results to come is like living in tomorrow. Let us learn to live in the present and not in the future.

Samatvam Yogam uchayte:
"Samatvam" is equal mindedness under all circumstances. The thought of the results that are going to come or the results when come, either pleasing or not pleasing, should not reduce the efficiency of the present work.

The end result of union of the Jivatman with the Paramatman is "Yoga."

To achieve this result, first of all the ego has to vanquish. Technically speaking, ego has to lose all its identification and merge with the Atman. This is also "Yoga."

Equanimity of mind to achieve this result is also "Yoga."