

Success vs Defeat

Date: 2004-04-23

Author: L.Harikumar

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,
Please accept my humble obeisances. Jai Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev.

I was going through the granthraj book this weekend. One wonderful article written by HG Devakinandan Prabhu inspired me very much. It was about 'success and defeat' in Krishna conscious endeavour and prabhu quoted the conversation between Vrtrasura and Indra before the demon was killed. Usually success and failure in material endeavours is measured by the result we get. In spiritual life also, when we continuously get good results, we become more and more enthusiastic and do more service. Thus success is the motivation behind our enthusiasm. Success includes the recognition we get for our preaching from others and 'visibility' in devotee circle, a very good 'image' and glorification of our efforts etc. And many things such as youthful body, good material facilities contributes to the enthusiasm. However in the advanced stage of devotion, a person is not moved by the results of his devotional efforts. His concern is just to please the Lord by his sincere efforts. Because sometimes a devotee's failure pleases the Lord. If the devotee is able to accept and digest failures because it is pleasing to the Lord, then he becomes very dear to the Lord. Such a devotee is always enthusiastic inspite of success or failure and Krishna calls this as 'yoga'. The classical example is given in Mahabharata and Ramayana.

In Mahabharata, Arjuna could win over great warriors like Bhishma, Karna and Drona because he was having the Lord's support. And after winning, he enjoyed the kingdom and finally achieved the lotus feet of the Lord. But in Ramayana, we see that jatayu fought to the best of his ability for the sake of Lord Rama and finally he was slain by Ravana. Lord Rama personally did the funeral for him and said, "*The abode which the yogis attain, ascend to that abode by My command, O Jatayu*". Jatayu attained Vaikunta in the presence of the Lord Himself. Seeing the two cases from a material point of view, we would say that Arjuna is a winner and Jatayu is a loser. But from the absolute view point(Lord's viewpoint), both are successful because both of them went back to Godhead. So success or failure in Krishna consciousness is how much the Lord is please and not the external results of our work. And real success is that we reach Vaikunta which is possible by sincerely working in constant remembrance of the Lord. And in one sense, getting failures helps us in realizing that Lord is the controller and we should depend on Him. And sometimes continuous success may force us to think that things are happening by our endeavour alone and we'll start planning and thinking 'logically' for getting more and more success. And instead of preaching or serving for the Lord's pleasure we'll start doing devotional activities for our own pleasure. And failure in our devotional efforts will expose this kind of mentality very nicely and show us where we really are. So great devotees like Kunti devi prayed, *Please let there be miseries upon us more and more because they'll help us to remember You always. So Krishna advises Arjuna in the Gita,*

BG 8.7

*tasmāt sarveṣu kālēṣu mām anusmara yudhya ca
mayy arpita-mano-buddhir mām evaiṣyasy asaṁśayaḥ*

Therefore, Arjuna, you should always think of Me in the form of Kṛṣṇa and at the same time carry out your prescribed duty of fighting. With your activities dedicated to Me and your mind and intelligence fixed on Me, you will attain Me without doubt.

This verse indicates that by fixing our mind on Krishna and carrying out our endeavour, we can go to the abode of Krishna. **Success in Krishna consciousness is sincere efforts without consideration of the results.** Such a success can take us to His lotus feet. And there can be no failure in Krishna consciousness because it is the only positive activity performed by the living entity (as the Gita says, *na hi kalyāṇa-kṛt kaścid durgatim tāta gacchati - one who does good is never overcome by evil*).

Your servant,
L.Harikumar
Chennai.