

A striver should reflect upon whether the soul (self) existed first or the body existed first. On reflection it is proved that first there is the self and then there is the body, the existence is first and the appearance is afterwards. Therefore a striver first should perceive the self as existent, not the body.



Link:— Upto the previous verse, there is description of seers who know the soul, as imperishable. In the next verse, Lord Kṛṣṇa to emphasize the same fact, speaks of those, who do not regard the soul as indestructible, by a negative inference.

य एनं वेत्ति हन्तारं यश्चैनं मन्यते हतम् ।
उभौ तौ न विजानीतो नायं हन्ति न हन्यते ॥ १९ ॥

ya enaṁ veti hantāraṁ yaścainaṁ manyate hatam
ubhau tau na vijānīto nāyaṁ hanti na hanyate

Both of them are ignorant, one who holds the soul as, the slayer and the other who considers it, as slain; for the soul, neither slays, nor is slain. 19

Comment:—

'Ya enaṁ veti hantāraṁ'— One who considers the soul as slayer is ignorant because the soul does not act. But by identifying with the body, it accepts itself as a doer. As an artisan, however clever he may be, cannot work without tools, similarly, the soul without body cannot do anything. Therefore, the Lord, in the thirteenth chapter, declares, that he who sees that all actions are performed by prakṛti (nature) alone, realizes the self, as non-doer (13/29). It means, that the self is not a doer. But, by identifying Itself with body it assumes Itself to be the doer of actions, performed by the body. If a man, does not identify himself with the body, he is not at all, a doer, of any activity.

'Yaścainaṁ manyate hatam'—One who holds the soul as slain, is also ignorant. As the soul is never the slayer, so it is

never killed, because the soul, always remains unaffected and unchanged. Only the perishable and changeable, can be slain. How could the imperishable and unchangeable, be slain?

'Ubhau tau na vijānīto nāyaṁ hanti na hanyate'—Both of these, who holds the soul as slayer, and he, who considers it as slain, are ignorant. A question arises, whether he, who holds the soul as slayer, as well as slain, is not ignorant. The answer is, that he is also ignorant, because the soul is neither a destroyer, nor can it be destroyed. It is always the same, without any change. Therefore, one should not grieve.

The soul, has been described, neither as a slayer nor as slain, because it was in the context of war, before Arjuna. But, actually the soul, is free from all actions and modifications.

Appendix—This Śarīrī (the possessor of the body) neither slays anyone nor is slain by anyone—it means that it is neither a doer of an action nor is an object of action nor is affected in anyway. Those, who, like the body, hold the Śarīrī as the slayer and as the slain, indeed don't attach importance to the discrimination between the body and the self but attach importance to indiscrimination.



Link:—In the next verse the Lord explains how this soul is immortal.

न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचि-

न्नायं भूत्वा भविता वा न भूयः ।

अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो

न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥ २० ॥

na jāyate mriyate vā kadāci-

nnāyaṁ bhūtvā bhavitā vā na bhūyaḥ

ajo nityaḥ śāśvato'yaṁ purāṇo

na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre