

available circumstances. Therefore, a Karmayogī neither changes circumstances nor does he seek these but utilizes these. The utilization of the available circumstances, is Karmayoga.



एवं परम्पराप्राप्तमिमं राजर्षयो विदुः।

स कालेनेह महता योगो नष्टः परन्तप ॥ २ ॥

evam paramparāprāptamimam rājarṣayo viduḥ
sa kāleneha mahatā yogo naṣṭaḥ parantapa

This Yoga handed down thus, in regular succession, came to the royal sages. But through long lapse of time, it was lost to the world, O oppressor of the foes (Arjuna). 2

Comment:—

'Evaṁ paramparāprāptamimam rājarṣayo viduḥ'— The kings, such as the sun-god, Manu and Ikṣvāku, learnt the Karmayoga, followed it and also, inspired their subjects to follow it. Thus, it was handed down in regular succession to the families of the royal sages. This Karmayoga is a special lore of the kings (the warrior class). Therefore, every member of the warrior class should know it. Similarly, the heads and leaders of a family, society, village and town etc., must also know it.

In ancient days, the kings who knew Karmayoga, administered the affairs of state smoothly, without being attached to royal pleasures. They had a natural inclination for the welfare of the subjects. The great Samskrta poet Kālidāsa writes about the kings of solar dynasty:—

"Those kings levied a tax on their subjects in the same way, as the sun sucks water from the earth, in order to supply it to the earth in the form of rain, a thousand times more."

It means, that the tax realized from the subjects by kings, was all used for public welfare. In order to, provide for their household expenses, they followed occupations, like farming.

By practising Karmayoga, they were automatically endowed with, singular knowledge and devotion. Therefore, even great sages went to those kings, in order to learn wisdom. Śrī Vedavyāsa's son named Śukadeva, went to king Janaka, in order to gain wisdom from him. In the fifth chapter of the Chāndogyopaniṣad it is mentioned, that six sages together went to king Aśvapati, in order to learn knowledge of Brahma, the Supreme.* Having mentioned kings, such as Janaka and others in the twentieth verse of the third chapter, and the sun-god, Manu and Ikṣvāku etc., here, as Karmayogīs, Lord Kṛṣṇa wants to urge Arjuna that he should also perform actions accordingly (follow Karmayoga) as the ancestors did, in former times, as he was also a householder and a member of the warrior class (Gītā 4/15). Moreover, it was very easy for him to learn it, because he belonged to the warrior class.

'Sa kāleneha mahatā yogo naṣṭaḥ'— God is eternal and the means—Karmayoga, Jñānayoga and Bhaktiyoga (Disciplines of Action, Knowledge and Devotion) etc., are also eternal, as they have been laid down by God. Therefore, they never cease to be. The Lord declares, "The real, never ceases to be" (Gītā 2/16). The yogas are eternal, even if these are not practised. Therefore, here the term 'Naṣṭaḥ' means, passing out of sight, rather than out of existence.

In the first verse of this chapter, this Yoga has been called imperishable. Therefore, if this term 'Naṣṭaḥ' is taken as 'out of existence' there will be a contradiction between the two statements. Moreover, the Lord again in the third verse declares, that He is going to reveal the same ancient Yoga, to Arjuna. It means that the religious texts and the learned sages who possessed knowledge of this Yoga, and practised it, had more or less disappeared from the earth.

* King Aśvapati declares, "In my kingdom there is neither a thief, nor a miser, nor a drunkard, nor one who does not offer oblation to the consecrated fire, nor an ignorant person nor an adulterer; then how can there be a prostitute" (Chāndogyopaniṣad 5/11/5)?

The Lord declares, that it was through a long lapse of time, that it disappeared, because at the beginning of creation, the Lord taught it to the sun-god, then it was handed down in regular succession and the royal sages come to know it. But due to the absence of great spiritual souls, possessed of the knowledge of this Yoga, it could not be handed down. So, at present only a few people know and talk about it.

Though this doctrine was not practised, yet it did not cease to be, because without selflessness, which is the essence of Karmayoga even other disciplines (such as of knowledge and devotion) cannot be constantly practised. A Jñānayogī through discrimination, by regarding actions as 'Asat' (unreal), renounces his affinity for these, while a Bhaktiyogī renounces affinity for them by surrendering these to God. No affinity, howsoever, is to be maintained. This is the doctrine of 'Karmayoga'. Therefore, a Jñānayogī and a Bhaktiyogī will have to adopt the principles of 'Karmayoga', even though they may not practise it. It means, that at present, though it has been lost, yet as a doctrine it exists.

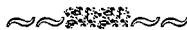
The fact is, that in Karmayoga, Karma (actions) have not disappeared but 'Yoga' (selflessness) has disappeared, because a man performs actions with a selfish motive. It means, that strivers have a firm belief that they will attain God, through actions in the same way as they acquire worldly things through actions. But they forget the reality, that God is, ever attained. Actions, are performed for the world while 'Yoga' (union with God) is, ever for one's own self. Yoga is not attained through actions, as is self-evident.* Therefore, the generality of the assumption that

* Yoga is attained by performing one's duty for the welfare of the world without any selfish motive. Action is performed in order to attain the state of actionlessness—'Action is said to be the means to attain to Yoga' (Gītā 6/3). When actions are performed with a selfish motive, the impetus for actions is enhanced. But when they are performed for the welfare of others the impetus for actions perishes. It means that nothing remains to be done by doing for others while actions are continuously performed when one does for himself. When nothing remains to be done, the striver realizes his union (which is self-evident) with God.

this Yoga can be attained through action, has practically caused the disappearance of yoga.

This human body, has been bestowed upon us, so that we may practise Karmayoga i.e., serve others without any selfish motive. But, we are so much absorbed in hankering after pleasures, prosperity and honour etc., that we do not pay heed to it. Thus, this knowledge has been lost, because we have forgotten it.

A man by rendering service can control not only birds, beasts and persons but also the gods, manes, sages, saints and even God. But having forgotten this practice, he has been overpowered by pleasures, which lead to hell and eighty-four lac forms of lives. This is called concealment of Karmayoga.



स एवायं मया तेऽद्य योगः प्रोक्तः पुरातनः ।

भक्तोऽसि मे सखा चेति रहस्यं ह्येतदुत्तमम् ॥ ३ ॥

sa evāyaṁ mayā te'dya yogaḥ proktaḥ purāṇaḥ
bhakto'si me sakhā ceti rahasyaṁ hyetaduttamam

It is the same ancient Yoga, that has been declared to thee today by Me; for thou art My devotee and My friend; and this Yoga is the supreme secret. 3

Comment:—

'Bhakto'si me sakhā ceti'—Arjuna regarded Lord Kṛṣṇa, as his companion (comrade) (Gītā 11/41-42) but now he has become His pupil (Gītā 2/7) i.e., earlier he was a comrade-devotee, while now, he has become a disciple-devotee. An order can be given or a sermon can be preached, only to a disciple rather than to a friend. The Lord preached His sermon, only when Arjuna surrendered to Him i.e., took refuge in Him.

The secret, which is not disclosed even to a comrade, is revealed to a disciple, who surrenders himself to his preceptor.