

अन्तवन्त इमे देहा नित्यस्योक्ताः शरीरिणः ।

अनाशिनोऽप्रमेयस्य तस्माद्युध्यस्व भारत ॥ १८ ॥

antavanta ime dehā nityasyoktāḥ śarīriṇaḥ  
anāśīno'prameyasya tasmādyudhyasva bhārata

These bodies acquired by the imperishable, indefinable and eternal soul, are spoken of, as perishable. Therefore, O Arjuna, fight. 18

*Comment:—*

'Anāśīnaḥ'—A thing, which never changes, never decays and never gets extinct, in the least, by any cause, under any circumstances, is called 'anāśī'. The soul (spirit), is not exposed to, destruction or change. So, it is indestructible or imperishable.

'Aprameyasya'—The soul, is beyond the domain of senses, speech and mind, so it is indefinable. It can be experienced, only by having faith in scriptures, and saints and their gospels.

The scriptures and saints, do not compel anyone to have faith in them. One, is free to have such faith or not to have it. In case one reposes faith in them, that 'tattva' (reality), is the object of his faith, otherwise it is not the object of, his faith.

'Nityasya'—The soul, does not undergo any change, it never ceases to be, it exists all the time.

'Antavanta ime dehā uktāḥ śarīriṇaḥ'—These bodies, of imperishable, indefinable and eternal soul, are spoken of as perishable i.e., they have an end. It means that these are perishing, every moment. They are nothing but, a mass of decay.

In the above sentence, a singular number, has been used for the soul, while plural for the bodies. Firstly it is so because the bodies of every embodied soul are of three kinds—physical, subtle and causal and secondly because a single soul, pervades all worldly bodies. Further in the twenty-fourth verse, the Lord calls it all-pervading viz., omnipresent. It means, that all the bodies are perishable, while soul is imperishable.

### An Exceptional Fact

All the bodies which, are perceptible, are perishable, while the soul is imperishable and eternal. But this immortal soul, though different from body, identifies itself with the body and develops 'an ego' or 'Tness with it, and thus regards its death, as self's (soul's) death. He who identifies himself, with wealth and learning etc., calls himself as wealthy and learned etc. Similarly, when one accepts a body, as one's own, one develops the feeling of attachment or mineness for it, and this attachment, extends to wealth and family etc., because he accepts these as his own, by having affinity with these. By this affinity of 'Tness and 'Mineness', all evils are born, one cannot discriminate, between the real and the unreal, and is thus grieved, while the wise are not grieved, because they realize that the real cannot perish and the unreal cannot exist.

'Tasmāt\* yudhyasva'—Lord Kṛṣṇa directs Arjuna, to fight i.e., discharge his duty, by discriminating between the real and unreal. He means to say, that he should not grieve but wage war, because the soul is imperishable, while bodies are perishable.

### An Exceptional Fact

In the seventeenth and eighteenth verses, there is a notable explanation of the real and the unreal, because the Lord wants Arjuna, to realize the real. By realizing the essence, one gets rid of the unreal, spontaneously. Thus by realizing this fact, he would discharge his duty. It shows, that every human being, without any distinction of caste, creed, colour or stage of life, can freely follow either the Discipline of Action, or Discipline of Knowledge, for his salvation. But, in practical life, a duty should be discharged,

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\* Here the word 'Tasmāt', has been used for drawing a conclusion after reasoning. In the Gītā 'Tasmāt' has been used either for drawing the conclusion after reasoning or at the end of a context. In 2/30, 3/19, 8/7 and 8/27 verses it has been used at the end of a context while in 2/25, 2/27, 2/37, 2/68, and 11/33 it has been used to conclude reasoning.

according to one's varṇa (caste) and āśrama (stage of life), by following the ordinance of scriptures. Therefore, here while discussing the real and the unreal according to the discipline of knowledge Lord Kṛṣṇa, orders Arjuna to fight or in other words he advises Arjuna to discharge his duty even if he follows discipline of knowledge.

Further, in the thirteenth chapter, where there is a description of virtues of knowledge Lord Kṛṣṇa in 13/9, also lays emphasis on non-attachment, and non-identification of the self, with a son, wife, home etc. If only hermits, had deserved the Discipline of knowledge (Sāṅkhyayoga), the Lord would not have mentioned, the need for non-attachment and non-identification of the self, with a son, wife, home etc., because hermits, have no sons, wives and homes etc.

Thus, by meditating on the Gītā, both the Disciplines of Knowledge, as well as Action (Karma), have proved to be independent means, for God-realization for all human beings, without distinction of any varṇa or stage of life.

**Appendix—**The Lord at the outset of His gospel explained that both 'gatāsūn' (dead) and 'agatāsūn' (living) are not to be grieved for. Then in the twelfth and thirteenth verses in order to explain that 'gatāsūn' is not to be grieved, He explained the real (the eternal) and in the fourteenth and fifteenth verses in order to explain that 'agatāsūn' is not to be grieved, He described the unreal (the transitory). Then He explained both 'Sat' (the real) and 'Asat' (the unreal) in the sixteenth verse. After that by discussing the existence of the real and non-existence of the unreal specially in the seventeenth and eighteenth verses, He completes this sub-topic.

Though there is existence only of the soul, not of the body, yet a man commits an error that he first sees the body and then perceives the soul in it; first sees the form (appearance), then perceives the existence. How long will this outward polish stay?

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