

## **Eighteenth Chapter**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Lord, in the thirty-ninth verse of the second chapter referred to Sāṅkhyayoga (the Discipline of Knowledge) and Karmayoga (the Discipline of Action). These two very disciplines were mentioned in the third verse of the third chapter as Sāṅkhya Niṣṭhā and Yoga Niṣṭhā. Arjuna wanted to know these two paths (Disciplines). But, as Lord Kṛṣṇa could not get an opportunity to explain divine nature and demoniac nature, from the seventh chapter to the fifteenth chapter, so Arjuna could not express his curiosity, from the third chapter to the seventeenth chapter.

Having mentioned the two paths, in the third verse of the third chapter, Lord Kṛṣṇa in the first verse of the fourth chapter, explained that He taught the imperishable Yoga, to the sun-god. Arjuna asked Him, how he could believe, that He taught the Yoga to the sun-god because His birth, came later, while the birth of the sun-god was earlier. The Lord in response to his question talked of His divine births (incarnations) and the Tattva of Karmayoga. In the thirty-fourth verse of the fourth chapter, He directed him to gain, that knowledge from men of wisdom, by obeisance, by questions and by service to them. Again, in the forty-second verse of the fourth chapter, He commanded him to establish himself in Yoga viz., Karmayoga (in the form of even-mindedness). So Arjuna, at the beginning of the fifth chapter, asked Lord Kṛṣṇa which of the two, the path of knowledge or the path of action (Karmayoga), was decidedly better, for him. The Lord, answered his question, in the fifth chapter and started the sixth chapter on his own.

In the thirty-third and the thirty-fourth verses of the sixth chapter, Arjuna put a question on restlessness (fickleness) of

mind. The Lord, answered his question in brief. Arjuna, from the thirty-seventh to the thirty-ninth verses, put the question, "What fate does a striver, whose mind wanders away from Yoga (at the time of death), failing to attain perfection in Yoga, meet with?" The Lord, answered the question in the sixth chapter. In the last verse of the sixth chapter, the Lord declared his devotee the best Yogī among all the Yogīs. The Lord, started the same topic in the seventh chapter, where he described devotion, in particular.

Lord Kṛṣṇa, at the end of the seventh chapter, while describing His entire form, used the terms Brahma and Adhyātma etc. So at the beginning of the eighth chapter, Arjuna put seven questions for the clarification, of those terms. The Lord, answered the first six questions in brief, while He explained the seventh question—how He is to be realized at the time of death, in detail. Then He described the topic, which was left, in the seventh chapter, in the ninth chapter and upto the eleventh verse of the tenth chapter. Arjuna, was very much pleased, when he heard in the ninth, tenth and eleventh verses of the tenth chapter, of the devotees and the Lord's compassion to them. So Arjuna, from the twelfth to the eighteenth verses, praised Him and prayed to Him to tell him in detail about His power of Yoga and His glories. Having described His important glories, at the end of the tenth chapter, He declares, "What need is there, O Arjuna, for the detailed knowledge ? I stand, supporting the whole universe, with a single fragment of Myself." Hearing these words Arjuna, prayed to Him to reveal to him His cosmic form. Having revealed His cosmic form, the Lord declared, that by unswerving devotion He can be seen and known and even merged into.

At the end of the eleventh chapter the Lord explained the merits of devotion and before that also He explained the merits of the worship of His absolute aspect (4/34—37; 5/13—26; 6/24—28 and 8/11—13). So Arjuna at the beginning of the twelfth chapter asked, "The devotees who with their minds constantly fixed in You adore You and again those who worship the Imperishable

and the Unmanifested—of these two, who are better versed in Yoga?" In response to his question Lord Kṛṣṇa, explained devotion and devotees, in the twelfth chapter, while worship of the Imperishable and the Unmanifested, in the thirteenth and the fourteenth chapters. In the twenty-first verse of the fourteenth chapter, Arjuna asked, "What are the marks of him, who has transcended the three modes of nature? What is his conduct and how does he get, beyond the three modes?" So the Lord explained the marks and conduct of such a transcendental person, and also explained, exclusive devotion, as the means to attain that state. The Lord, started the fifteenth chapter, in connection with His exclusive devotion. At the end of the chapter, He declared that a person who knows Him, as the Supreme Person worships Him, with his whole being (heart or spirit). He means that persons of divine nature, worship Him. It connotes, that persons of demoniac nature, do not worship Him. Before this chapter also, in the fifteenth verse of the seventh chapter and in the twelfth verse of the ninth chapter, demoniac nature, while in the thirteenth verse of the ninth chapter, divine nature have been described, in brief. So the Lord, started the sixteenth chapter, to explain divine nature and demoniac nature in detail and explicitly.

Arjuna, put the question, at the beginning of the seventeenth chapter, on faith which was in connection with the Lord's declaration, which he made, in the last but one verse, of the sixteenth chapter. The Lord, answered his question by describing the faith, of three kinds in the seventeenth chapter. Now Arjuna, expresses his desire to know severally, the truth about the two paths of knowledge and of action, which were mentioned by Him, in the third verse of the third chapter.

अर्जुन उवाच

सन्न्यासस्य महाबाहो तत्त्वमिच्छामि वेदितुम् ।

त्यागस्य च हृषीकेश पृथक्केशिनिषूदन ॥ १ ॥

*arjuna uvāca*

**sannyāsasya mahābāho tattvamicchāmi veditum  
tyāgasya ca hr̥ṣīkeśa pṛthakkeśiniṣūdana\***

**Arjuna said:**

**O Mighty-armed, O Inner-controller of all, O Slayer of Keśi, I**

\*On the basis of what Lord Kṛṣṇa has answered to Arjuna's curiosity, his other curiosities can be guessed. They are as follows—

(a) Sannyāsasya mahābāho tattvamicchāmi veditum:—

(1) What is Sannyāsa?

Freedom from egoistic notion (notion of doership), and untaintedness of reason (18/17).

(2) What are the characteristics (marks), of a Sannyāsī?

He should be free from attachment, non-egoistic, full of resolution and zeal, and unaffected by success or failure (18/26).

(3) What (spiritual) discipline, should a Sannyāsī follow?

He should be endowed with a pure intellect, he should resort to dispassion, dwell in solitude, restrain senses, body, speech and mind and so on (18/51—53).

(4) How should he conduct himself?

He should perform action, without a sense of doership, and being free from attachment, and aversion (18/23).

(5) How does he see beings?

He sees, the one imperishable Being (God) in all beings, undivided in the divided (18/20).

(6) What is its fruit?

To enter into the Supreme (18/55).

(b) Tyāgasya ca hr̥ṣīkeśa pṛthakkeśiniṣūdana—

(i) What is relinquishment?

Performance of duty by relinquishing attachment to actions and their fruit (18/6).

(ii) What should a relinquisher relinquish i.e., his characteristic?

He should relinquish, the fruit of action (18/11).

(iii) How should he perform his duty or what discipline should he follow?

He should perform his duty, by renouncing attachment and fruit (18/9).

(iv) How should he conduct himself?

Neither aversion to disagreeable action, nor attachment for agreeable action (18/10 first half).

(v) How should he perform his duty?

He should perform it merely, because it should be performed (18/9).

(vi) What is its fruit?

To get established in God (18/10 2nd half).

desire to know severally, the true nature of Sannyāsa (Sāṅkhyayoga) and of Tyāga (Karmayoga). 1

*Comment:—*

'Sannyāsasya mahābāho tattvamicchāmi veditum tyāgasya ca hr̥ṣīkeśa pr̥thakkeśiniṣūdana'—While addressing Lord Kṛṣṇa as 'Mahābāho', Arjuna means to convey that being omniscient, He is able to explain all the topics. So He should satisfy his curiosity in such a manner, that he may understand the topic easily.

By addressing Him as 'Hr̥ṣīkeśa,' Arjuna means that He is the Lord of senses, and inner-controller, of all beings. So He should explain to him everything in connection with the nature of 'Sannyāsa', and 'Tyāga', even if he does not demand.

By using the term 'Keśiniṣūdana' he means, that as He frees His devotees, from all troubles and problems, He should also remove his doubts.

Generally, a curiosity is expressed with two purposes, (i) to translate it into practice, (ii) to understand the principle. Those, who want to understand the principle, can become learned by possessing bookish knowledge, and can even write books, but they cannot attain salvation. But those, who after understanding principle, translate it into practice, can attain salvation.\*

Arjuna also expressed the curiosity, so that, having known the principle, he may translate it into practice.

The term 'Sāṅkhyā' used in the expression 'Eṣā te'bhihitā sāṅkhye' (Gītā 2/39) has been termed 'Sannyāsa', here. The Lord, regards the terms 'Sāṅkhyā' and 'Sannyāsa' as synonyms—as in the second verse of the fifth chapter, He uses the term 'Sannyāsaḥ', in the fourth and the fifth verses the term 'Sāṅkhyā', while in the sixth verse again 'Sannyāsa'. Therefore here also 'Sāṅkhyā', has been termed 'Sannyāsa'.

Similarly the term, 'Yoga' used in the expression 'Buddhiryoge

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\* Having known the unreal as unreal a man cannot attain the real, so long as he does not fix 'Realization of the real' as the topmost aim of his life.

tvimārṇ śṛṇu' (Gītā 2/39) stands for the term 'Tyāga', used here. The Lord regards the terms 'Yoga' and 'Tyāga', as synonyms as—'Saṅgaṁ tyaktvā', in the forty-eighth verse of the second chapter and in the fifty-first verse of the same chapter 'Phalaṁ tyaktvā', in the third verse, of the third chapter 'Karmayogena yoginām', in the twentieth verse of the fourth chapter 'Tyaktvā karmaphalāsaṅgaṁ', in the fourth verse of the fifth chapter 'Yogau', in the fifth verse, 'Tadyogairapi gamyate,' in the eleventh verse, 'Saṅgaṁ tyaktvā', and in the twelfth verse 'Karmaphalaṁ tyaktvā', and in the twelfth verse of the twelfth chapter 'Tyāgāt'. All these expressions have been used for 'Karmayoga'. Therefore, Arjuna has used the term, 'Tyāga' for 'Yoga' i.e., the Discipline of Action, here.

In fact, Sannyāsa, consists in renouncing one's affinity completely with matter through discrimination, while 'Tyāga', consists in giving up attachment for actions and their fruits. He, who does not get attached to actions and their fruits, is said to have attained to Yoga (6/4).

**Appendix**—At the beginning of the third chapter, Arjuna in a complaining mood told Lord Kṛṣṇa his confusion between Karmayoga and Jñānayoga; at the beginning of the fifth chapter he wanted to know which of the two Yogas was better and here he wants to know the true nature of the two.



*Link:—In response to Arjuna's curiosity, the Lord, in the next two verses, cites four different views of other thinkers, on the subject of Sannyāsa and Tyāga.*

श्रीभगवानुवाच

काम्यानां कर्मणां न्यासं सन्न्यासं कवयो विदुः ।

सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं प्राहुस्त्यागं विचक्षणाः ॥ २ ॥

त्याज्यं दोषवदित्येके कर्म प्राहुर्मनीषिणः ।

यज्ञदानतपःकर्म न त्याज्यमिति चापरे ॥ ३ ॥