

Whatever shines here, shines due to the radiance of that great Light of lights beyond all darkness. And of that great Light of lights beyond all darkness, you are all radiant rays. To shine is your birthright.

There is no greater acquisition in this life than perfect faith in God that stands all tests and trials.

Faith alone opens the door of Eternal Bliss and the Immortal Abode. Have unswerving, unshakable faith and enter the illimitable domain of everlasting peace.

Swami Chidananda
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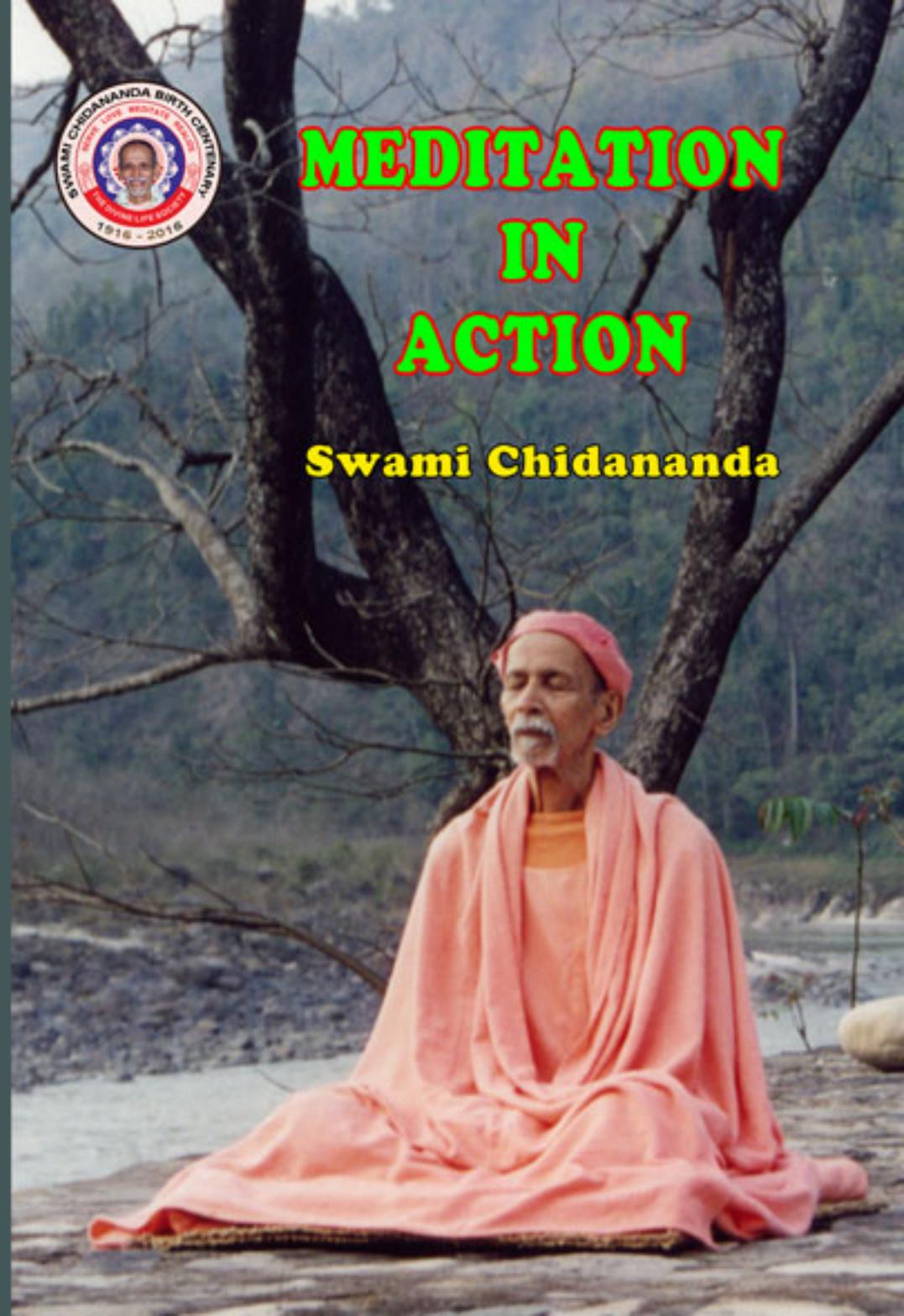


A DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY PUBLICATION



MEDITATION IN ACTION

Swami Chidananda



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IN
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(Three Talks on the 18th Chapter of
Srimad Bhagavad Gita)

Sri Swami Chidananda



(Series of three talks by Param Pujya
H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj on the
18th Chapter of Srimad Bhagavad Gita at the
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FIRST TALK

Beloved immortal Atman! Blessed children of the Divine, immortal pilgrim souls temporarily in a state of physical embodiment and psychological limitations and confinement. During this brief earth pilgrimage you are most fortunate that during this particular incarnation you are not merely pilgrim souls but you are also seeking souls. Many times have you come, many times have you departed.

The Lord gives a hint about this to Arjuna. The Lord says: "I shall expound to you the ancient secret science, the knowledge of the Supreme, which I expounded to Manu and to other wise kings of the Ikshvaku race and now I shall expound that to you." Arjuna asks, "I do not understand? Yourself and myself, O Krishna, we are of recent birth, and these beings who have been taught the same sacred science, they lived ages ago. How could You have taught them?" In reply to this query the Lord says, "O Arjuna! This is not the first time that we are here, you and I. Very many times we have been here before. I know of all the times I have appeared and done this great work but you, it so happens, this knowledge has not been given to you, it has been kept away from you." And it is a great mercy! If you knew all the past incarnations, it would be impossible for you to live. Because you would remember all the others with whom you had dealings and would be

overcome by various emotional attitudes. Fortunately, it has been kept a closed book. And so there is this pattern ever since the dawn of creation: coming into being, sojourning for a brief while here and again departing, only to come again.

But then, if this was a bed of roses, if this was all milk and honey, coming again and again into this place would not be very unpleasant. But it so happens that the Lord, who is the originator of this phenomenal process of *Sristi*, *Stithi* and *Laya*, has been very frank about his own handiwork: “Arjuna, this is a world of sorrow,”

Duhkaalayam ashaashvatam...(B.G. VIII/ 15)

Here everything is impermanent and full of sorrow, there is no real happiness. Pleasurable sensations, yes! But happiness, no! Pleasurable sensation is a reaction of our nervous system to external stimuli. Pleasure due to sight, depending upon our optical nerves and its network; pleasure due to touch, depending upon our tactile network of nerves, pleasurable experience from listening to nice things, depending upon our auditory nerve and its network and pleasure due to inhaling a fragrance, depending upon the olfactory nerve and its network and pleasant experiences due to taste, depending upon your gloss pharyngeal nerve and its network. And if they are functioning, you have these fleeting pleasurable experiences and they are not always dependable. Because, if something is wrong in another part of your

system, that which might have given you pleasure, does not give you the same experience. If something goes wrong with the central nervous system, then all these things fail to register.

This is the actual analysis of what we call pleasure, enjoyment. It is nothing but a phenomenon, a process of certain nervous sensations being carried from the outermost terminal along the nerve through your brain centre where it has to be converted into a certain type of sensation. This is the entire range of so-called human physical experiences through sight, sound, taste, touch and smell. This is not a state of mind. The mind may react to it in the form of an acquisition or a rejection. If the mind reacts in the form of 'Yes' we label it pleasure: "I enjoyed it." If the mind reacts to it in the form of 'No', then we do not enjoy it, we do not want it, we suffer it and we label it as pain.

This is the entire anatomy of the so-called range of experiences that human beings undergo from the moment they wake up from the Sushupti Avastha, and the whole world stands there as Rupa, Rasa, Shabda, Sparsha, Gandha, until they go back into slumber and this outer universe vanishes. You go into a different state where these five organs of perception cease to function. So, when they cease to function, the outer universe with all its infinite so-called pleasure giving objects is non-existent to you. The outer universe does not exist. And day after day we unthinkingly

delude ourselves into thinking that in this way we seek our happiness. Never for a moment do we stop to first of all define the term 'happiness'. What exactly is this thing which I'm trying to find here? What is our definition of this elusive concept of happiness? It is an inner state of mind, and anything that depends upon something else has already lost its freedom and it is in a state of slavery.

The Lord who created this universe knew very well. He says, "Arjuna, this is an abode of grief and sorrow." Therefore having come into this realm of Asukha, if you wish to have happiness, come seek where it is. It is in the eternal, never changing, all perfect Cosmic principle which is of the very nature of pure Bliss. The Nitya Tattva that we call Bhagavan or Parabrahman or the state of Nirvana or the Siddha Avastha of the Jains, call it the kingdom of God, call it Jehovah or Allah or Ahura Mazda, call it the supreme Tao or the state of illumination or Satori as Zen would call it—no matter, what term is used, that ultimate state is a state of perfect Bliss. There, all the human quests since the dawn of creation become fulfilled. There it is 100% absolute bliss.

*Anityam asukham lokam imam praapya
bhajasva maam...(B.G. IX/33)*

In this great sentence, the Lord gives a hint to Arjuna. "Look here! The world around you is something that has been brought into being by My Shakti called Maya or Prakriti, and She has made

everything very attractive. If you wish to live in the midst of these attracting objects and go through them day by day, and yet at the same time not be deluded by them and lose your way, then make Me your goal, make Me your be all and end all. Live for My attainment, attend to all your other works but know that they are secondary. You have not come here for that. You are born for greater things, and you are heir to eternal glory. Because you are a part of Me. And therefore, I will tell you:

*Daiviee hyeshaa guna mayee mama maayaa
duratyayaa
Maameva ye prapadyante maayaam etaam
taranti te...(B.G.VII/ 14)*

“My Maya is very difficult, formidable. But, those who take refuge in Me, they cross easily over the great Samsara Sagara, as one would step over the puddle formed by the footmarks of a cow. Therefore, the way to do it is, ‘Make Me your goal’.”

Fulfil your duties. Do whatever has to be done (Kartavya Karma). But, the greatest of all duties is to fulfil your divine destiny, and that is the attainment of the fullest knowledge of your real identity. And God’s grace, light, can take any form.

Into the life of the great illustrious Maharishi Tagore, the father of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, light came in the most extraordinary way. He was waiting for the ferryman to take him across the river. The ferryman had already gone

with some people to the other shore. So he had to wait for him to come back. He was a reflective person, a mystical person. Dust blew dried leaves and other things, and then a piece of paper landed and he casually bent down and picked up that torn piece of paper. God's grace touched him at that moment. That piece of paper was a torn page from the Isavasya Upanishad. And it was the first Shloka:

*'Isavasyam idagum sarvam yad-kincha
jagatyam jagat.'*

*All this—whatsoever moves in this universe
(and those who move not) is covered (indwelt or
pervaded or enveloped or clothed) by the Lord.*

with the translation in Bengali. Sri Devendranath Tagore looked at it and he took in that great idea. At that instant, his life was transformed. A great light dawned in his mind. He was no longer the same being. The eyes that had hitherto seen the world as an object, a universe of inert matter, from that moment, when he read and re-read this Shloka 'Isavasyam idagum sarvam yad-kincha jagatyam jagat', immediately the veil was lifted from his mind and intellect; when he lifted his head and beheld the universe, he no longer beheld anything material, anything inert. He beheld everything as the Supreme Reality, 'Ishvara Tattva ota-prota.' He saw the spirit manifest in everything that his eyes took in. From that time he realised, "I am in God. God is in me. There is no distinction between Him and me. I

did not understand this. All my life until this age, I have been living in God and I never recognised it." The whole universe stood before him in a different light. That was how God came into his life and touched him. It was the grace of God that blew the wind and brought this truth about the universe at the feet of Devendranath Tagore.

God comes through listening to a lecture, through reading a book or through hearing a chance conversation between two people, but in one way or the other it is Grace that comes into your life and changes you from being a mere pilgrim soul into a seeking soul. When you are a pilgrim soul, you go the way all the others are going, and you don't know where it is leading to. You just follow the pattern of everyone around you as they have been living generation after generation, your father, grandfather, great-grandfather and so on, and you think this is it. But when Grace dawns, we begin to realise, "This is not it. I have been sent here with a definite purpose. I have before me a specific goal to attain." The purpose of living is for a specific attainment and achievement. And what is that specific achievement and attainment? Nothing less than realising your own eternal relationship with your cosmic source, your eternal abode, the very root and origin of your being.—Physically, mentally, psychologically, yes I may be a human individual and I may have my origin in a human household. But I who dwell within this human

personality, I am timeless, I am ageless. I do not belong to this material universe. My origin is God. I am one with Him. He is my Aadi, Madhya and Anta. In Him I have got my being. In Him I live my entire life, and I must work consciously towards the attainment of that great destiny. And therefore, I have this consciousness, this awareness: I have come with a purpose. Life is a golden opportunity given for the attainment of a great destiny, and that destiny is Atma Jnana. That destiny is the realisation of the unchanging Reality, hidden behind this panorama of ever changing names and forms. Everything here is temporary. It comes and goes. But there is something which never changes. Amidst all these transitory, temporary appearances, there is an eternally present reality, and to behold That is this golden chance given to me.

*Samam sarveshu bhooteshu tishthantam
parameshvaram
vinashyatsu avinashyantam yah pashyati sa
pashyati...(B.G.XIII/27)*

He really sees, who sees the eternal existing in the non-eternal appearance.

The Sat Chit Ananda Tattva is hidden behind Nama and Rupa, which are the ever-changing but hiding veils. Behind it is that which exists as a luminous principle of awareness or consciousness, and it is the quintessence of absolute Bliss. That Sat Chit Ananda Tattva is my

goal. I must pierce beyond this veil and attain
That great reality.

This awareness has been given to you and therefore in the midst of this Vyavahara, you have the urge, you have this great aspiration: "I must know the Reality. That is why God has made me a member of the human race, that unique creation of His which has the power to think, feel, reason, understand, investigate, analyse and ultimately realise, experience. Of all the forms of living things created by God, I am unique and therefore I must prove my uniqueness, and I must use my intellect, my mind, my heart in order to realise." This is an awakening to or awareness of a dimension of your being beyond the apparent physical dimension and beyond the inferable, psychological dimension. I say beyond 'inferable' because no one has ever seen the mind. It is only a concept. They say this thinking process is what is known as the phenomenon of mind. "I think, I remember, I plan, I imagine, I try to ponder." All these processes are made possible because of some hidden something, and they call it 'mind'. So through inference, you believe in the existence of some power, some faculty of your personality which you have never seen. No one has ever brought the mind and said, "Yes! Here it is." He must have seen the brain. The super science of modern inventions and scientific progress has made possible to see hidden things. But the functioning of the mind is never seen. You may

have charting of Alpha and Beta impulses but that is the functioning of the brain. The mind is a mysterious thing.

*Ya devi sarva bhuteshu medha rupena
 samstitha,
 Namastasyai, Namastasyai, Namastasyai
 Namo Namah.
 (Durga Saptashati)*

It is an elusive thing which no one has ever seen but which is everything. It is that which makes you what you are. It gives you the ability to think, reason, remember, project into the future, plan, imagine. All these marvellous, intricate things are the endowment of God. And that is why you are a human being. Endowed with this, you are able to think: "There must be something in me, a dimension which I never knew existed. There are people who have experienced that dimension and even gone beyond and known themselves in the deepest centre of their reality." Having come to this knowledge, you are seeking souls. This Mumukshutva, this Jijnasa is a gift of God.

And therefore, I have the privilege of sitting with a very special section of earth pilgrims who have come to know that they have a divine destiny. Life has a divine purpose that goes beyond the earth plane. And life is specifically the great gift of God to enable us to attain that supreme state which once and for all liberates us

from all the painful experiences that go to make up earth life. This earth life is a ladder to supreme blessedness. Therein lays its one great redeeming feature. And, it is worthwhile to put up with all the ups and downs of earth life, the problems and pains and sufferings ... all that becomes minor when you realise that there is a wonderful chance given to you. You go through all of it because this is a chance. This is an ascent of the spirit to its pristine glorious state of freedom and fearlessness, of absolute emancipation and bliss. Therefore, this endows you with an inner strength: "Putting up with everything, I will go straight towards that great target as an arrow shot from the bow. I shall make my life a relentless pursuit of this quest: determined, persevering, and ultimately in this very life, in this very body, I must attain self-realisation."

This quest for attaining the great reality has made you into Sadhakas. You are devotees of God, you are Sadhakas, and you have to do this Sadhana in and through the rough of this earth life and its inevitable complications. And here is the supreme value of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita. It is above all a teaching of realisation, perfection and liberation through action. Trying to attain the Supreme Being through love, through prayer, through devotion, through worship, is Bhakti Yoga. Time-honoured in all the great living religions of the world, is the mystical approach to God through restraining the senses, withdrawing

the mind, gathering it through concentration and fixing it upon the great reality, and that is Dhyana Yoga. But you cannot sit in a room and do Dhyana all the 24 hours. Hunger will force you to come out. If your hunger does not force you, your dependents will not allow you to sit like this. They will say, "What are you doing? Go work and see that we are fed." That is what drove Ratnakar to become a dacoit. He had married a tribal dame and thought that he will have a nice comfortable life in the forest. But then she said, "You have married me and therefore it is your duty to go and earn." He said, "How shall I earn? I am not part of your tribe. I am not skilled in hunting." She replied, "It is your problem. You have to go and do it any way!"

In this way, in the third chapter verse 5 of the Srimad Bhagavad-Gita, the Lord says, "It is impossible for an embodied being to remain without action". Action is part of the nature of Rajas. We have to act. And if you act driven by desire, selfishness, ignorance, it will bind you. But if you act with wisdom, knowing that 'I am only a witnessing being, and that action is brought about by a fivefold combination of factors, and I am not one of them. I'm something that belongs to a different dimension and a different Tattva altogether. Therefore, I am in the midst of activity but I'm not the actor'. Knowing thus, if you engage in action without the sense of doership, then action cannot bind you. The Srimad

Bhagavad-Gita is a Scripture par excellence of the skill in action. If you act with this skill, then action cannot bind you.

Make the Supreme Being your only objective in life, and there is no more desire for any other petty thing here. When desire is taken out of the activity, then you know that the value of all things in this world is cipher. They have a utilitarian purpose, to meet some immediate need of this physical body. When it is extremely cold, you want a sweater. When summer comes, the sweater becomes unpleasant. Nothing in this world has any intrinsic or inherent value by itself. Once you realise that, things outside will fail to attract you, and you are in a position to pass through life, doing all that has to be done but detached. This is the heart and centre of the philosophy of the Bhagavad-Gita, the teaching on how to be in the world but not of the world.

When Mahatma Gandhiji returned from South Africa, he settled down on the banks of the Sabarmati River in Ahmedabad and brought that Ashram into being. He had been influenced by the wisdom teachings of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita and decided to translate it into Gujarati. He named that first translation 'Anasakti Yoga.' He did not call it Srimad Bhagavad Gita, he called it Anasakti Yoga, the Yoga of not being attached, passing through life in a spirit of detachment. The great Guru of Swami Vivekananda, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Deva said, "If you

want me to tell you the teaching of Lord Krishna it is Tyaga.” He was a simple villager, and he also said, “I will tell you, if you go on repeating the word Mara, Mara, Mara, Mara, it becomes Rama, Rama, Rama, Rama. Similarly, if you go on repeating the word, ‘Geeta, Geeta, Geeta, Geeta, Geeta, you will ultimately find yourself repeating Tyagi, Tyagi, Tyagi, Tyagi, Tyagi.” Tyaga is the heart of the Geeta message. Therefore, to go through life renouncing all desires and attachment for things, having your mind fixed only upon the supreme ultimate reality, then in and through action, you can attain perfection.

*Svakarmanaa tamabhyarchya siddhim
vindati maanavah...(B.G. XVIII/ 46)*

Worshipping Him with his own duty, man attains perfection.

The Gita Jnana Upadesha culminates in the 18th chapter in this ultimate revelation of doing your Swadharma without the sense of doership. And unattached to anything in this world, that action will liberate you from the necessity of coming back into this world. And, there is an extraordinary similarity in one way between the commencing chapter and the concluding chapter of the Srimad Bhagavad-Gita. In the commencing chapter, Arjuna says, “No! No! No! No! Massacre and slaughter all my kith and kin standing before me here, what a great sin, Oh Lord Krishna! What are you asking me to do? Chaos and confusion will result in our entire society.”

*Aho bata mahatpaapam kartum vyavasitaa
vayam...(B.G. I/46)*

“No. No. No. No. I shall not fight. Rather than slaughtering and killing my kith and kin, it is much better to renounce my Kshatriya Dharma, I do Tyaga of my Kshatriya Dharma, take up the begging bowl and wander as a mendicant.” So, Arjuna decides to do Tyaga, to renounce his Kshatriya Dharma and take to Sannyas rather than wade through blood to attain his kingdom and throne. And here, we have Arjuna asking in the 18th chapter,

*Sannyaasasya mahaabhaaho
tattvamichchaami veditum
Tyaagasya cha risheekesha prithak
keshinishoodana...(B.G. XVIII/1)*

“I would like to know the essence of Sannyasa and Tyaga”. Arjuna begins with saying I shall renounce everything and become a Sannyasin. But after listening to Lord Krishna’s Jnana Upadesha from the second chapter to 17th chapter, he begins to realise that something is wrong. What I thought Tyaga or Sannyasa does not seem to be the proper thing. “Now O Krishna, will you please tell me what Tyaga, what Sannyasa is?” He comes to this point. So, there is the similarity, but there is an extraordinary juxtaposition of two totally opposing situations. In the first chapter Arjuna says, “I shall not fight”, he drops his bow and sinks to the ground, fully overcome with Moha, delusion. Lord Krishna is

starting to convince him. And at the end of the 18th chapter this same Arjuna says as the ultimate concluding declaration,

*Nasto moha: smritir labdhaa
 tvat prasaadaanmaya achyuta
 Sthitosmi gata sandehah
 karishye vachanam tava
 (B.G. XVIII/ 73)*

“My delusion is gone, and I am ready to follow your admonition. Whatever you say I’m ready to do.” That is why the most important Shloka, to you, me and each one of us today is

*Yatra yogeshvarah Krishno yatra paartho
 dhanurdharah
 Tatra sreer-vijayo bhootir dhruvaa neetir
 matir-mama...(B.G. XVIII/ 78)*

Sanjaya concludes by saying, “where there is life guided in obedience to the Lord’s teachings, carried by wisdom and where there is the readiness to follow whatever has been said, and readiness to implement the wisdom that has been received, there is success, there is victory, there is glory and there is firm adherence to Dharma. There is no doubt about it.”

We shall go into the details of this wonderful revelation of the 18th chapter which contains the quintessence of all the other 16 chapters tomorrow and the day after tomorrow. We thank the Lord for giving this opportunity to consider these eternal teachings given to mankind for all

times. And I am privileged to impart it to you who are not merely pilgrim souls but you are seeking souls! God bless you and make your quest end in success, blessedness and illumination.

Hari Om Tat Sat. Paramatmane Namaha.

SECOND TALK

Worshipful adorations to the Purna-Avatar Bhagawan Sri Krishna, who graced and blessed the global human family with this priceless Gita Jnana Upadesha containing the quintessence of the Upanishadic divine wisdom. It also embodies within its brief 18 chapters and 700 verses the practical method for attaining the experience of Reality. The necessary practices, the way of living and acting in our life will make life a process of attaining that Supreme Reality. Therefore, it is also a Yoga Shastra. The way of life that the Gita expounds is powerful and effective in bringing us closer to that great Reality. It is Brahma Vidya, it is Upanishad, it is Yoga Shastra, directly expounded by God Himself in all His glory. They say, that Lord Krishna is Shodasha Kala Yukta, Purna Avatar of Para Brahman. It is this fullest manifestation of Divinity that has personally given the teachings. Lord Krishna expounds the nature of the ultimate Reality and also the method of attaining that transcendental experience and the art and science of living your life in such a way that it will become the means for its attainment. Spiritualising your life and transmuting all activities into a process of linking yourself to the Divine, is a process that brings you into a continuous relationship with the source and origin of your Being. So, life becomes no longer an activity that binds, that stands in the way of your

God attainment, but it becomes activity that takes you towards God. It becomes activity that has the power to remove whatever obstacles may be in your path to God realisation. Life is spiritualised, activity is converted into Yoga. For, in the ultimate analysis, what is Yoga? Yoga is anything and everything that links you up with God. Yoga is anything and everything that helps you to move in the direction of God.

Sajana Kasai was carrying on his trade as a butcher. But the way in which he did his profession, instead of it becoming an obstacle, became Yoga. The devout service of her husband by a wife is to her no longer a worldly activity. It becomes Yoga, for she sees God in her husband, and thus her service becomes worship of her visible God in whom she sees the ultimate Reality.

For a disciple, loving and sincere service of his Guru is not a service on the secular level. It becomes converted into absolute Yoga. For he sees in the Guru not a human person, but he sees God manifest in and through the Guru. Therefore, his Guru Seva becomes Bhagawat Aradhana.

Sankaracharya, the great expounder of Kevala Advaita Vedanta Siddhanta, dismissed the entire phenomenal universe as a temporary appearance upon the canvas of the mind, as Sankalpa-Vikalpa, which has no existence of its own. *Jagat mithya swapnavat (The world is unreal like a dream)*. Yet, at the same time he said and all the Siddhanta says, Karma is the main cause for

human bondage, and if Karma is inevitable, we have to find a way through which we can convert Karma into a process of God attainment. And therefore, he has given us that famous Sloka that occurs in his *Siva Manasa Pooja Stotra*:

*Yadyat karma karomi tat tad akhilam
Shambho tavaaraadhanam.*

Whatever actions I perform, all these I offer as adorations to you my Lord!

That same Jagat Guru Adi Sankaracharya said, "As long as a human being, born out of the Prakriti and the three Gunas, has qualities of Tamas and Rajas in him, he cannot refrain from Karma." If he still wants to progress towards Moksha, then he has to find out the art and science of converting this very process into a Moksha Sadhana. And that is precisely what the 18 chapters of the Srimad Bhagawat Gita expound to us. In the midst of activity, how can we convert this activity into a liberating process? In the seventeenth chapter we have Sannyasa twice expounded to Arjuna. In the fourth chapter we have the exposition of Jnana Karma Sannyasa and in the fifth chapter, Karma Sannyasa Yoga. When he has already expounded Sannyasa in two of the previous chapters, why does the Lord in the very last and concluding chapter take up the same theme of Sannyasa, Moksha Sannyasa Yoga?

The purpose of all the Scriptures that exist within the Satya Sanatana Vaidika Dharma, the

one central objective and purpose they wished to fulfil is to show the way for the Jivatma to attain liberation. All the Granthas, the Vedas, the Upanishads, Brahma-Sutras, Bhagawad Gita, Mahabharata, Ramayana, the 18 Puranas and whatever has been written during the course of centuries, they have but one objective—to tell us how being caught in the Jaala (net) of Maya of this world, how we can attain liberation in and through this life. That is the crowning glory, which alone the human creature is in a position to attain.

When we take up the study of the 18th chapter, we must understand that the word 'Sannyasa' is not the fourth Ashrama that is part of the Varnashrama Dharma of the Hindu way of life. Life ends with the fourth Ashrama, Sannyasa, after having fulfilled the duties and obligations of the Brahmacharya Ashrama, Grihastha Ashrama and the Vanaprastha Ashrama. And by that time usually, the individual is already in an advanced stage of age. We have the episode of Yajnavalkya and his two wives, Katyayani and Maitreyi. Yajnavalkya was a Grihasthi. He was a Brahma-Jnani, a great towering figure in the Upanishadic Vedic scene. But he was a Grihasthi with plenty of property, cattle, land, servants, gold and silver. And ultimately he thinks, "I have lived my life fully. I've enjoyed all that has to be enjoyed. But now I must take to the Sannyasa Ashrama. I must retire into the forests, and there my only

duty is to dedicate my heart, mind and intellect to the Supreme Reality or Brahman. I have to merge in Brahman.” A Sannyasin has no other duty except Atma-Chintana, Brahma-Chintana. There are only three things for him, Bhiksha, Shaucha and Brahma-Chintana. Hunger is inevitable as long as there is the body; so one has to take Bhiksha; when one eats, one has to eliminate, so Saucha is necessary; and then, Brahma-Chintana—day and night Brahma-Chintana.

Arjuna was a young man, he was a prince, a warrior, so why is the Lord talking to him about Sannyasa? The Lord is talking to him about giving up what is in the way of transforming his active life into a process of approaching God. Action you cannot avoid. And unless you know the secret of acting in a way that the action becomes a liberating process, action will bind. And the principle that converts action into Yoga and makes it into a liberating process is Sannyasa. Sannyasa here means renunciation, giving up. In our normal day to day activity, where we do not enquire into the real nature of life and actions, where we do not discriminate, the action becomes a binding factor. First Arjuna refuses to act, refuses to engage in battle which he himself had sought, made all preparations for and for which he was fully armed in a chariot on the field of battle. At the last moment, he said, “I shall not fight! I shall not act!” He had the idea that this action is sinful, and he will be partaking of that

sin. He had the idea that, "I am going to do this"—Kartrutva Abhimana. This is the sense of doership and not having the insight, that there is some Great Power that pervades all things and without which even a dry leaf cannot move. Man is nothing at all if God is not the inner power that propels Him to act. If with Kartrutva Abhimana an individual engages in action, that action becomes a source of bondage. Because, it is propelled by a Sankalpa of his little human ego. The renunciation of Sankalpa, the Sannyasa of Sankalpa takes away from the action the power to make you bound. Kartrutva Abhimana is one reason for bondage. Another reason is that all human beings engage in action driven by desire. "Out of this action, I wish to gain something, I want to enjoy this experience". Therefore, desire is the propelling factor behind all actions. Phalaakanksha. As long as there is Phalaakanksha, action becomes a source of bondage. Kartrutva Abhimaana, the idea that, "I am doing the action" and the desire to obtain something, these become the factors that bring about the binding nature of normal human activity, when there is no clear perception that there is no actor except God and God alone. His power is making this universe move: suns, moons, stars, galaxies, oceans—all are in a dynamic movement because of the great will of God. The will of God pervades and prevails everything and we are nothing. Realising this, one completely surrenders to the will of God and says,

“Here I am! I place myself at your disposal. Do with me what You want. As You say, I shall let You act in and through me.”

At the end of the great revelation of the 11th chapter, the Vishwarupa Darshana Yoga, the Lord turns to Arjuna and says, “Now do you see? Are you going to fight? Are you going to kill? Are you going to engage in battle? Have you not seen? Everything is done. I have done everything. Realise that there is nothing for you to do and that you are but a mere instrument in My hands. For fulfilling the Maryada of the external universe, I make you My instrument.”

Nimmita maatram bhava savyasaachin...
(B.G. XI/33)

With these words, He revealed to Arjuna the secret of inaction in the midst of action. Akarma within Karma. And it is such Akarma that ultimately takes one to liberation. Therefore, this chapter has the befitting name, Moksha Sannyasa Yoga. Tyaga here is used for renunciation. Renouncing whatever stands between you and God attainment. In several chapters of the Gita the nature of renunciation is again and again reiterated, and the summing up is, you have to renounce the desire for the fruit of action:

*Karmanyeva adhikaaraste maa phaleshu
kadachana...(B.G. II/47)*

In this battle of life, you cannot afford to be chicken-hearted. You cannot afford to be fearful.

Strength is the one thing needed, and so the first renunciation is:

*Kshudram hridaya daurbalyam tyakto tishtha
parantapa...(B.G. II/ 3)*

You have to give up this weakness, you have to have self-confidence. "I am a child of God. I may be alone, without human relations or friends. But, I am never alone because God is with me. He is my eternal companion. With Him, I can overcome everything." If this faith is there, then there is strength within.

You have to give up, you have to renounce all forms of weakness, and bravely face life. He says, "whatever is divine, that is to be accepted; whatever is undivine, has to be renounced." And He singles out three great enemies of man, and much later in His own inimitable style Sankaracharya has to say the same thing in his 'Vairagya Dindima':

*Kamascha, krodhascha, lobhascha dehe
tishtanti taskarah
Jnana ratna apaharartam tasmaat jagrata
jagrata.*

Within you abide three dacoits ready to plunder the great gems of wisdom. They are carnal passion or impure desire; they are anger which is the inevitable corollary of passion. Where there is anger, you can be sure that there is carnal passion. They go together, and Lobha makes your heart a stone. Compassion and kindness are the

very source and bedrock of Dharma. The whole edifice of Buddhism and Jainism rests upon this great virtue of Daya. Selfishness and greed turn your heart into stone. Shankaracharya says, “These three are your dire enemies. Therefore, beware! Beware! Beware!” And Krishna says,

*Trividham narakasyedam dwaaram
naashanamatmanah
Kamah krodhah tatha lobhah, tasmaat
etat trayam tyajet..(B.G.XVI/ 21)*

Triple is the gate of this hell, destructive of the self—lust, anger, greed, therefore one should abandon these three.

He brings out what is to be renounced, what is real Tyaga. Not giving up your bank balance, your house or motor car or your wife and children or something that you are doing. As long as you have not renounced impure desire, gross passion, anger, as long as you have not renounced greed, avarice and cupidity, your renunciation is not renunciation. Again in the 14th and 16th chapters of the Gita, He hints at what real renunciation is. Real renunciation is not an external action. Real renunciation is an internal action. He expounds the ‘Guna Traya Vibhaga Yoga’ and says: “To attain the supreme goal of God realisation, you have to go on increasing Sattva Guna. And in this process, you have to renounce all that is Tamasic and Rajasic when is linked up with Tamas.” Rajas when it is linked up with Sattva, can become a helpful liberating process.

And in the 16th chapter it is the renunciation of everything that is Asuric. You have to renounce completely, give up everything that is undivine. Renunciation, therefore is a recurring theme in the teachings of the Gita. And Sannyasa is being preached and expounded to one who is right in the midst of Pravritti. Just imagine, Lord Krishna, the Guru is teaching Sannyasa and teaching Tyaga to a fully armed prince who is in the centre of a battlefield between two armies, about to start a great war!

What does it mean? Tyaga and Sannyasa are absolutely indispensable. Not merely for the Sannyasin, Yogi and Babaji. Tyaga and Sannyasa are absolutely necessary and indispensable for everyone who is in the midst of dynamic activity. It is meant for everyone, wherever he is placed by providence, if he wants to make life a liberating force. If you are a true Hindu, if you are a true follower of Satya Sanatana Dharma, then your goal of life should be liberation! Then alone you have understood the essence of Hinduism. The great call of Hinduism is: "Come! Come! Become a Yogi and attain liberation." A follower of the Satya Sanatana Vedic Dharma should be a Mumukshu, a seeker after liberation. Liberation comes out of wisdom, therefore he is a Jignasu. *Shraddhavan labhate jnaanam*—wisdom dawns in one who has devotion to God. And *Buddhi yogam dadaami te*—it is a Shraddhalu Bhakta to whom God gives His Grace—the wisdom that liberates.

Arjuna said in the first chapter, “I will renounce everything and become a mendicant. I don’t want this kingdom which I have to obtain wading through a river of blood, slaughtering and massacring my own kith and kin”. Then Krishna through 16 chapters is telling him, “Be clear-sighted. Think well. You are overcome with attachment, Moha, Asakti, Mamata. Your Buddhi has no Viveka. It is completely dominated by strong emotion. Be calm. If you do not slay any one of them, if you do not engage in this action, do you think they are going to live forever? Do you think by your not killing them, they are not going to die?”

*Jaatasya hi dhruvoh mrityuh dhruvam janma
mritasya cha B.G. II/27*

“It is inevitable. The wise do not grieve over that which is inevitable. Wake up! I will expound to you the Reality, the great Truth.” And through patient advice, patient revelation, answering all his questions, He is clearing all his doubts. And after Krishna had expounded the ‘Shraddha Traya Vibhaga Yoga’, Arjuna has gone a long way.

Krishna ultimately comes to the 18th chapter, as Arjuna begins to see things in a proper perspective. His thinking has risen to a higher level. He is able to perceive things which he did not perceive when he was overcome by delusion. And so Arjuna says, “Yes! My idea of what is

Tyaga and what is Sannyasa seems not to be all right. Please expound this to me very clearly.”

*Sannyaasasya mahaabaho tattvam icchaami
veditum*

*Tyaagasya cha hrisheeksha prithk
keshinishoodhana...(B.G. XVIII/ 1)*

Lord Krishna goes direct to the heart of the matter:

*Kaamyanaam karmanaam nyaasam
sannyaasam kavayo vidhuh...(B.G. XVIII/ 2)*

Renouncing all desire for personal gain: “I act because it is my duty, and I act because out of this action I may perhaps be able to fulfil the highest ideal that the Vedic way of life has placed before the human individual.” That is, you have been sent into this world to be a source of benefit to God’s creation. All ethics and morality has been summed up in this one concept of Paropakara. This body has been given so that it may be an instrument of benefit to God’s creation. If thus thinking, you engage in action, you are practising Sannyasa. Yoga means practice, Abhyasa. (Vishaada has also been termed Yoga. But that is a different subject.) But in all the other 17 chapters termed Yoga Shastra, Yoga means Abhyasa. This Sannyasa therefore is to be practised in the middle of activity, so that you can keep yourself out of your action.

*Kaamyanaam karmanaam nyaasam
sannyaasam kavayo vidhuh
Sarvakarmaphalatyaagam phraahustyaagam
vichakshanaah...(B.G.XVIII/2)*

The sages understand Sannyasa to be the renunciation of action with desire; The wise declare the abandonment of the fruits of all actions as Tyaga.

Some people say, "No! Sannyasa means that all actions have to be given up. That is real Tyaga." Why? By their very nature, all actions have got defects. And because all actions are defective, if you engage in them, the result will be bondage. All actions have to be completely renounced. And some say, "Nishedha Karma is to be given up, but not Karma that is incumbent upon you as a human individual in a society."

*Tyaajyam dosha vadittyeke karma
prahurmaneeshinah
Yajnadaanatapahkarma na tyaaajyamiti
chaapare...(B.G. XVIII/3)*

Some philosophers declare that actions should be abandoned as evil; while others declare that acts of sacrifice, gift and austerity should not be relinquished.

Some wise people say, "Action has to be renounced because it contains defect, and he who becomes the actor, becomes the partaker of this defect." But others say, "Actions that are beneficial to others should not be renounced."

Yajna is purifying, it is uplifting. Out of Yajna much benefit and good comes not only to you, but to all creatures. Together with the Yajna, there is worship of the Gods, chanting of Vedic Mantras and Daana Punya Karma. Therefore, sacrifices that are of a purifying nature should not be given up. Sharing what you have with others is a noble process, it enables you to rise above yourself; it is not to be given up. And penance is a great purifier. Within our nature, there is Tamo Guna, there are countless Samskaras and Vasanas that are negative. Karma is Mishrita. We have engaged in Shuba-Ashuba Karmas in previous lives. When we come here, a certain portion has to be worked out in a single incarnation. It is a mixture — Shubha-Ashubha Karma. Out of that, we engage in positive as well as negative actions, and these Samskaras are so deep within us, they are invisible, subtle and elusive. How can we purify them? If your outer cloth becomes dirty, with hot water and soap, you can clean it. If your hands become dirty, you can wash them. If there is dirt inside your body, you can take a purgative, you can fast or can take medicine. The Pranamaya Kosha can be purified through Kumbhak. But much deeper than the Sthula Sharira and the Sukshma Sharira is the Karana Sharira where all the Vasanas and Samskaras are embedded. What power, what Shakti, what force can go into the deepest recesses of the Karana Sharira and purify the Ashubha Vasanas? That Shakti is Tapasya. It

is the Mahabharata war within your psyche between that which pulls you downwards and that which wants to take you upwards. There is a constant tension between these two, and determining to take the side of that which is positive, divine, spiritual, that will take you upwards. This continuous state of subduing all that is against your progress towards God is Tapasya. This tension between the higher and the lower, the greater and the lesser, creates within you a fiery power. The word Tapasya comes from the word Taapa, heat. A psychic heat is generated within you that has the power to burn up all dross. Tapasya generates the power to penetrate into the Karana Sharira and completely purify your inner Self. Therefore, some say, “Yajna, Dana and Tapa, they are the purifying Karmas and they should never be renounced. Even if all the other things are renounced, these three are not to be renounced.”

O Arjuna, these are the opinions of various people.

I will now tell you what is to be renounced. Three types of renunciation are there, O best among Bharatas:

*Nischayam shrunume tatra, tyaage bharata
sattama*

*Tyaago hi purushavyaagra trividhas
samprakeertitah...(B.G. XVIII/4)*

Kaaryamityeva yatkarma niyatam kriyate'

Arjuna

*Sangam tyaktvaa phalam chaiva sa tyaagah
sattviko mataha...(B.G.XVIII/9)*

The real Tyaga, Tyaga of the highest quality is to engage in Karma because it is one's duty. "I engage in Karma because it is my duty. I expect nothing in return, I have the satisfaction that I have done my duty. They say, 'virtue is its own reward'. With this noble idea, if I fulfil my duty, that is enough for me. I do not require recognition or thanks from anyone. The very idea that I have done my duty in the eyes of God is enough." If one engages in action and desires for no gain, then he is a real renouncer. He is a Tyagi, he is a Tapasvi, even though he is right in the midst of action. In activity, you are in a state of Tyaga.

Na dveshtyakushalam karma kushale

naanushajjate

*Tyagee sattva samaavishto medhaavee
cchinna sanshayah...(B.G. XVIII/10)*

The man of renunciation, pervaded by purity, intelligent and with his doubts set asunder, does not hate a disagreeable work nor is he attached to an agreeable one.

And without any doubt he is doing the correct type of Tyaga. Engaging in such action all his doubts are dispelled by the purity of his intellect; he does not hate disagreeable action nor does he become attached to an agreeable action. In this

state of equanimity within, he neither shrinks from a disagreeable action nor is he impelled through attraction to a pleasant reaction. Thus, acting with the wisdom of the sole ideal "It is my duty", you are absolved from the binding factors of the action. Action becomes a liberating force. Action is the binding force if you have the idea, "I am doing it". Action no longer binds you when you have the idea, "I am fulfilling the role which I am meant to fulfil. I am carrying out my duty."

THIRD TALK

Worshipful homage and loving adorations to That supreme world teacher Purna-Avatar Sri Krishna Bhagawan, who out of Grace infinite, Ahetu-Ki-Kripa, Grace without any cause or reason, has bestowed upon humanity for all times the priceless treasure of the Bhagavad-Gita. It is the quintessence of the Upanishadic wisdom, that gives to us the exposition of the great supreme eternal reality, Brahma Vidya. It also offers the Yoga Shastras, the practical method of aspiring and striving for and successfully attaining that supernal experience. And it puts us into inseparable spiritual relationship with the supreme reality which is not distant, but is an ever present indwelling reality. The shortest Upanishad, the Isavasya Upanishad, contains 18 short verses, even as the Srimad Bhagavad Gita contains 18 chapters. That shortest Upanishad brings to us the priceless treasure of the highest experience, the Aparoksha Anubhuti, Brahma-Anubhava and expounds very briefly 'Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma'. Whatever is seen, heard, tasted, touched, smelt, thought about—now, ages ago and ages hereafter—is nothing but Brahman and Brahman alone. That alone exists: the one without a second, supremely non-dual, Ekameva Advitiam Brahma; Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma; Brahmaiva Satyam. This Upanishad also enjoins us to engage in action:

*Kurvanneva karmaani jjeevishecchat gum
samaah*

Engaging in action, you must live a full life.

We get the heart of the Gita, the teaching of Lord Krishna, expounded in the very second Mantra of the Isavasya Upanishad. The Isavasya Upanishad is regarded as one of the most important Upanishads. And it holds a place which no other Upanishad holds. For all the other Upanishads belong either to the Brahmana portion or the Aranyaka portion of the Vedas. But the Isavasya Upanishad belongs to the Samhita portion of the Vedas. Therefore, every verse of this Upanishad is regarded as a Mantra. They sometimes refer to the Isavasya Upanishad as the Mantropanishad. Of all the Upanishads the most important are 10 Upanishads, the Dashopanishad, and the very first of the ten important Upanishads is the Isavasyopanishad. It forms part of the Yajur Veda Samhita, and it is in the Vajasaneyi portion. Therefore it is also called the Vajasaneyi Upanishad or Mantropanishad. And our tradition sometimes holds that the entire Brihadaranyaka Upanishad is an exposition of the Truths expounded in the Isavasyopanishad, that the Brihadaranyakopanishad is a commentary upon the Isavasyopanishad. That is the importance of this Upanishad.

The first verse of the Upanishad brings out the revelation granted by Lord Krishna to Arjuna in the 11th chapter, the Vishvaroop Darshana

Yoga, where Arjuna was granted the Divya Chakshu and he beheld everywhere nothing but God and God alone, nothing but divinity and divinity alone:

*Ishaavasyam idagum sarvam yat kincha
jagatyaam jagat*

*All this—whatsoever moves in this universe
(and those that move not) is covered (indwelt or
pervaded or enveloped or clothed) by the Lord*

And the next important Adesha of the Isavasya Upanishad, 'engaging in action we must live a full life', is brought out in the 18th chapter of the Srimad Bhagavad-Gita. And if the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad is a vast, elaborate commentary upon the Isavasyopanishad, the Srimad Bhagavad-Gita Jnanopadesha is no less.

They said that Vyasa summed up the entire Upanishadic revelation of the ultimate reality and put them into a concise aphoristic form in his Vedanta Sutras or Brahma Sutras, on which Sankaracharya has written an outstanding Bhashya. Narada and Shandilya wrote aphorisms upon Bhakti. The great Patanjali Maharishi expounded the science of meditation through his Yoga Sutras in eight stages, 'Ashtanga Yoga'. But where have we been given an exposition on Karma Yoga? How many people can go into the forest and engage in deep meditation? How many people have got the equipment to study Brahma Sutras, Upanishads and Vedanta, and how many indeed

can really and truly love God for God sake only? Asking for nothing but to love Him, “Grant me absolutely unmotivated love for Your lotus feet. I have no wish, I have no want. I have only one great longing in my heart to love You, and to love You alone.” The Bhakti that is present within the great living religions of the world consists of going to church, mosques, synagogues, temples in order to ask for something. They offer worship so that God may be propitiated and give them what they want: solve their problems, remove their difficulties, give them success and prosperity. To put it frankly, it is Sakamyā Bhakti, not Bhakti for Bhakti’s sake. True Bhakti can arise only in a pure heart that has emptied itself of all desire, knowing that the value of the entire world is cipher. If you analyse the real nature of things, they are giving more sorrow and sufferings and restlessness than the opposite.

So it is very difficult to practice Vedānta or Yoga, deep meditation where time and space are transcended. It is equally very difficult to have devotion. In millions, one or two: a Prahlada, a Meera, a Narada, a Chaitanya Mahāprabhu — they had Bhakti of that kind. And the vast, vast majority of human beings are engaged in ceaseless activity in Prapancha, the world of Vyavahar in Samsara. This being the fact, there was a need to find a path of how in the midst of activity one could be established in Tyāga, one could be established in Sannyasa, one could be

established in Bhakti, and one could be in a constant state of Yoga. And is there such a path? The Gita answer is hundred percent Yes! That is exactly why Lord Krishna gave his Gita Jnana Upadesha to Arjuna, because He was not other than him. Nara and Narayana are one and the same. Again and again He says, "You are very dear to me. Therefore, I expound to you this greatest of all secrets, the supreme secret which none else has been able to know from me." Therefore, Gita is Karma-Mimamsa.

Now let us try to consider the central message of the 18th chapter of the Gita? If you want to have an answer and a clear understanding, you have to go back to the very first chapter. Arjuna had asked Lord Krishna's help to engage in a battle, and Lord Krishna had tried his utmost to avert this battle, this bloodbath, this carnage, even humbling Himself to go as a messenger on behalf of the Pandavas. He was the ruler of Dwaraka, but he said, "Yes! If possible I shall see that war is averted." He had to return without the mission being accomplished. And therefore, what had to be, had to be. At the very last moment, Arjuna refuses to fight, and that was the occasion for imparting the Gita Jnana Upadesha. War was the only course left, and when it was about to start, Arjuna refused to fight. Then Krishna had to tell him, "You have to fight. It is your duty. By this alone, you will be fulfilling your duty as a Kshatriya, as a warrior, as a prince." What are the

duties of a Brahmin? What are the duties of a Kshatriya? What are the duties of a Vaishya? What are the duties of a Shudra? Very clearly it is explained in the 18th chapter that heroism, valour, fighting, Udaarata, Daana are the duty of a Kshatriya. The whole Gita arose out of the necessity of Krishna to somehow pursue Arjuna that his decision not to do his duty, not to engage in action, was a wrong decision which was due to not understanding the nature of action, the nature of Tyaga. He starts His exposition of the secret of life, human nature, of life and death. He tells Arjuna, "You think that you are doing the action, but it is not so. The supreme actor is the Supreme Being, and whatever is being done, is being done through His power. You are only like a puppet at the end of a string; you have to be the instrument in His hands." He actually gives a direct revelation of this to Arjuna in the 11th chapter. After that, He follows it up with six more chapters and ultimately, the 18th chapter contains the entire exposition of the nature of true action, the nature of true Yoga, the nature of true renunciation and relinquishment, Sannyasa and Tyaga. Arjuna becomes perfectly convinced that the way to attain both Tyaga and Sannyasa is not renunciation of action but engaging in action in the right and proper manner.

And therefore, at the very beginning of the 18th chapter Arjuna says, "I thought I will renounce action, I shall no longer fight. But now I

see that my idea of renunciation was not proper. Please tell me what is real renunciation? What is Tyaga and what is Sannyasa?” This question is so very important to each and every one of us here in this Prapancha. All of us have to engage in action, and all of us have to attain Self-realisation. Engaging in action, we have to fulfil our divine destiny. Our mission in life is to attain liberation through God experience. Are these two contradictory? Conclusively, Lord Krishna says, that the essence of Tyaga and Sannyasa is an inner spiritual attitude to action.

What is Sannyasa?

It is the renunciation of all action that is the outcome of selfish desire and greed for gaining something.

*Kaamyanaam karmanaam nyaasam
sannyaasam kavayoviduh*

*The sages understand Sannyasa to be the
renunciation of action with desire*

And what is Tyaga?

*Sarvakarmaphalatyaagam praahustyaagam
vichakshanaah...(B.G. XVIII/ 2)*

*The wise declare the abandonment of the fruits
of all action as Tyaga*

To ask or to desire that out of this action one should gain something is the seed of greed, and that makes Karma Bandha Kaaraka. Karma binds when it is accompanied by greed for gain. Karma

binds when it is driven by desire. When such actions are renounced, you are already in the free field. You can engage in any action you want, as long as you give up all actions driven by selfish desire. That is Sannyasa. That is Tyaga. Action is not the opposite of either Tyaga or Vairagya or Sannyasa. It is the attitude in which you engage in action and the approach to action. Action in order to please God by fulfilling your duty is the action that liberates.

And in trying to explain this, Krishna says, “I will expound to you, O Arjuna! Five factors go to make up an action. Without these five factors, there can be no action.

*Panchaitaani mahaabaaho kaaranaani
nibodha me
Saankhye kritaante proktaani siddhaye
sarvakarmanaam...(B.G. XVIII/ 13)*

For any action five factors come into play. The circumstances which call for this action is called the Adhistaana or the field, the actor himself is Karta and the type of exertion in order to achieve that action is the Chestha, and the means by which this action can be attained it is the Karana (not only our own instruments, external instruments also), and ultimately He says, “the fifth factor that governs action is Providence, the will of God.—There is the field, the immediate circumstances which call forth an action and then the actor himself, the various types of exertion

that he has to engage in and the means and the instruments for action, and ultimately Providence, destiny, Daiva.

And Lord Krishna shows step after step that all these five factors have a threefold nature. The 14th chapter is again expounded here. Who is a Sattvic Karta, a Rajasic Karta, a Tamasic Karta? What is Sattvic Karana, Rajasic Karana and Tamasic Karana? What is Sattvic Tyaga, Rajasic Tyaga, Tamasic Tyaga? All the five factors are classified into these three Gunas. The simple reason is that all activity has to be done within the field of Prakriti by the human actor who is himself part and parcel of Prakriti. Lord Krishna says, “O Arjuna, neither in this world nor in the heavenly worlds these three Gunas are absent. They are present everywhere. And therefore, he who chooses the Sattvic way of acting, Sattvic instruments of action, Sattvic attitude and approach to action, he liberates himself in and through action. Action becomes for him the liberating Yoga.”

*Adhishthaanam tathaa kartaa karanam cha
prithagvidham;
Vividhaashcha prithakcheshtaa daivam
chavatra panchamam...(B.G. XVIII/ 14)*

*The seat (body), the doer, the various senses,
the different functions of various sorts, and the
presiding deity also, the fifth.*

*Shareeravaangmanobhiryat karma
 praarabhate narah;
 Nyaayyam vaa vipareetam vaa panchaite
 tasya hetavah...(B.G. XVIII/ 15)*

Whether it is a mental, a verbal or a physical action, these five causative factors prevail. They are present in all types of action: mental, verbal, physical, positive or negative, righteous or unrighteous.

*Tatraivam sati kartaaram aatmaanam
 kevalam tu yah
 Pashyatyakritabuddhitwaan na sa pashyati
 durmatih...(B.G. XVIII/ 16)*

One who is dull-witted thinks, “I’m the actor. I’m doing this.” He does not realize that it is the confluence and combination of these five causative factors that ultimately achieve any action, and that he is only a witness. This is the main cause of bondage. In the beginning Arjuna said, “How can I kill all these people? I am committing a great sin. I will go to hell. Why are you goading me to this action?” Arjuna fell into this delusion because he took upon himself the sense of doership, and therefore Krishna tells him, “O Arjuna! You are not the actor. Without these five causative factors, no action is possible and four of them belong here and the fifth is Providence. It is That Supreme Being by whom all is pervaded.”

Therefore, surrender to That Supreme Being and put yourself entirely at His disposal: "In whatever way You want to make use of me, O Lord! O Supreme Power! make use of me. I shall be willing to be Your instrument." Once you do that, you can plunge into any action, and no action can bind you. In the midst of activity, you will be absolute Nishkriya, just as the central axis of a whirling wheel. The wheel is revolving at a great speed, but right at the very centre, there is stillness. In the centre of tremendous hurricane is absolute stillness.

*Yasya naahamkrito bhaavo buddhiryasya na
lipyate.*

*Hatwaapi sa imaam lokaan na hanti na
nibadhyate...(B.G. XVIII/ 17)*

He who is free from the egoistic notion, whose intelligence is not tainted (by good or evil) though he slays all these people, he slayeth not nor is he bound by the action.

Prakriti is working. And all these five factors combined are performing all the actions. If this clear understanding comes, no action has the power to touch you.

In each Karma there are many factors according to the aspects in which you look at it. There is the knower, the thing to be known, and the process of knowing it.

*Jnaanam jneyam parijnaataa trividhaa
karmachodanaa;
Karanam karma karteti trividhah
karmasangrahaah...(B.G. XVIII/ 18)*

*Knowledge, the knowable and the knower
form the threefold impulse to action; the organ, the
action and the agent form the threefold basis of
action.*

*Jnaanam karma cha kartaa cha tridhaiva
gunabhedatah;
Prochyate gunasankhyaane yathaavacchrunu
taanyapi...(B.G. XVIII/ 19)*

*Knowledge, action and actor are declared in
the science of the Gunas (Sankhya philosophy) to be
of three kinds only, according to the distinction of
the Gunas. Of these also hear duly.*

*Sarvabhooteshu yenaikam
bhaavamavyayameekshate;
Avibhaktam vibhakteshu tadjnaanam viddhi
saattvikam...(B.G. XVIII/ 20)*

That knowledge is Sattvic, where in the midst of multiplicity there is one thing alone, and that is the inner reality. One who, seeing that one thing prevailing in the midst of apparent diversity and multiplicity, making his activity an adoration to That One Supreme Reality, his actions become adorations. His actions become the process of liberation. Then action becomes supreme Yoga, it becomes Maha Yoga. But if in the midst of these multifarious names and forms, one sees them as

different things and becomes attached or repelled, that is Rajasic activity. Such activity coloured by like and dislike, Raga-Dvesha, tends to bind. And the Tamasic activity is goaded by desire. The awareness of the all pervading reality being present in and through all these activities is totally absent in the person of gross Tamasic perception. Being oblivious of that Cosmic Being, he relates himself upon a personal relationship of like or dislike or relation of love or hate. That knowledge that, “I am dealing with my friend, my relative or my enemy”, is Tamasic knowledge.

However, the action that is performed with a sense of duty without any expectation of fruit, without expecting anything, without attachment or hatred, that action is known to be Sattvic, that action is Yogic activity.

The action that is performed with the expectation of fruit, with the sense “I am the doer” and with great exertion, that action tends to bind, it is Rajasic.

*Yattu kaamepsunaa karma saahankaarena
vaa punah;*

*Kriyate bahulaayaasam
tadraajasamudaahritam...(B.G. XVIII/ 24)*

But that action which is done by one longing for the fulfillment of desires or gain with egoism or with much effort—that is declared to be Rajasic (passionate)

*Anubandham kshayam himsaam anavekshya
cha paurusham
Mohaadaarabhyate karma yattat
taamasamuchyate...(B.G.XVIII/25)*

That action which is undertaken from delusion without a regard for the consequences, injury and (one's ability)—that is declared to be Tamasic.

That action which is undertaken on the basis of delusion, either to fulfill one's desire or to satisfy one's senses, brushing aside all considerations, that action is Tamasic.

Now, there are three kinds of Kartas, three kinds of agents: Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic. The Karta who says, "Whatever is done, is done through the power of God that resides in me. He is the Antaryamin; He is the ultimate Karta Dharta. I'm only an instrument, and He is using me to make this action." He perseveres in that action no matter how difficult it is, resigning himself to the will of the Lord. He is a Sattvic actor.

But one who is passionate, desirous of fruit, wanting some personal gain he is Rajasic. Once there is greed, all sense of right or wrong, pure or impure goes away.

*Raagee karmaphalaprepsur lubdho
himsaatmako'shuchih;
Harshashokaanvitah kartaa raajasah
parikeertitah...(B.G. Ch.18\27)*

Passionate, desiring to obtain the reward of actions, greedy, cruel, impure, moved by joy and sorrow, such an agent is said to be Rajasic.

Because, when one is driven by greed and the desire to enjoy the fruits of action, no one can come in his way, he is prepared to do anything to eliminate the obstacle. That is the chain that has been described elsewhere about desire: thinking of objects of enjoyment, there arises a desire for these objects and when desire arises, one engages in action, in order to fulfill that desire. And when engaged in action to obtain that desired object, if someone comes in the way, anger manifests itself. So, anger is the direct manifestation of lust or desire. And once anger takes hold of a person, he is completely out of balance, and whatever he has learnt is forgotten. Due to anger, the mind becomes completely clouded, all past experiences are forgotten and in this state of complete loss of memory the intellect comes to a stop. Ravana is a classical example. Ravana was a Brahmin. He was a Sama Veda Paarangata, he was a great Tapasvi, a great Shiva Bhakta. Nevertheless, he was overcome by desire, by passion, overcome by Ahamkara, and because of this his entire intelligence and his Tapasya were of no avail and he lost everything.

The Tamasic agent is described as follows:

*Ayuktah praakritas stabdhas shatho
naishkritiko'lasah
Vishaadee deerghasootree cha kartaa
taamasah uchyate...(B.G. XVIII/28)*

*Unsteady, vulgar, unbending, cheating,
malicious, lazy, desponding and procrastinating –
such an agent is called Tamasic.*

In this way, Krishna analyses for Arjuna the various factors that constitute the anatomy of an action: “O Arjuna! Do you see now clearly that you are not doing anything, you are not acting? It is Prakriti with these five factors that bring about all activity. Four of them are within the range of Prakriti; one is beyond Prakriti, that is Daivi Iccha. Your decision not to act has no meaning. You are made of Prakriti. Prakriti is made of three Gunas. Dynamism is the hallmark of Prakriti. Para Brahma is Nishkriya because Kriya is out of question for a Being that pervades everywhere.

Whether you are willing or not willing, you will have to engage in action because Prakriti is acting in and through you. And if you do it unwillingly, grudgingly, without wanting to do it, then you become bound by your own attitude. But knowing that it is Providence and Prakriti that engage in all activity, if you willingly surrender to that great Power in full devotion, then you co-operate with Prakriti and you are liberated from the binding power of activity.

And in the culminating portion Bhagavan says, "I am myself that great Power of powers beyond Prakriti and therefore, surrender to Me."

*Eeshwaras sarvabhootaanaam
hriddeshe'rajuna tishthati;
Bhraamayam sarvabhootaani
yantraaroodhaani maayayaa...(B.G. XVIII/ 61)*

The Being who makes all people act is the Supreme Being seated in the hearts of all, and we are nothing. We are made to whirl around by his Divine will operating in and through us. That Eeshwarah is the originator of all activity and all actions: mental, verbal and physical. And now I tell you, O Arjuna, what you have to do:

*Tameva sharanam gaccha sarvabhaavena
bhaarata;
Tatprasaadaatparaam shaantim sthaanam
praapsyasi shaashwatam...(B.G. XVIII/ 62)*

Fly unto him for refuge with all thy being, O Arjuna; by His grace thou shalt obtain supreme peace and the eternal abode.

Surrender unto Him with your entire being. You will attain peace in the midst of the most hectic activity. If you surrender to Him, you will attain peace, and through such activity, you will ultimately reach that Supreme state from where there is no return. Thus, I have imparted to you the supreme knowledge.

*Iti te jnaanamaakhyaatam guhyaad
 guhyataram mayaa;
 Vimrishyaitadasheshena yathecchasi tathaa
 kuru...(B.G. XVIII/ 63)*

*Thus has wisdom, more secret than secrecy
 itself, declared unto thee by Me; having reflected
 over it fully, then act as thou wishest.*

Having fully, completely thought about it,
 having fully considered it, now it is up to you to do
 whatever you want.

Arjuna has now clearly understood that all activity is governed by Daiva and all activity is the dynamism of Prakriti, "I am nowhere. I'm only being utilized, I am only an instrument. Therefore, let me willingly and gladly co-operate by surrendering to this grand process and not have my ego stand as an obstacle. Once this is done, I know my highest good is secure. Lord Krishna has assured it. My delusion is gone due to Your Grace, I am ready to do Your bidding." Here, he does not say, "I stand up ready to fight." The idea that he is fighting and killing is no more there in Arjuna. He is only aware that, "Here I am doing the bidding of the Divine. I am fulfilling my duty and whatever is His will is being worked out through me. So he says:

*Nashto mohas smritirlabdhaa
 tvatprasaadaanmayaachyuta;
 Sthitosmi gata sandehah karishye vachanam
 tava...(B.G. XVIII/ 73)*

Destroyed is my delusion as I have gained knowledge through Thy grace, O Krishna. I remain free from doubts. I will act according to Thy word.

If with this attitude activity is engaged in, there is only worship offered to the all pervading presence of the Divine and right in the midst of activity, there is Sannyasa. And, where there is no wish for obtaining any personal gain out of avarice and greed, there is Tyaga. Tyaga and Sannyasa are the very essence of true activity. That is Yoga and worship. Activity is Yoga and worship. This is the Karma Mimamsa expounded in the 18th chapter of the Srimad Bhagavat Gita. And thus, the main thesis propounded by the first two Shlokas of the Isavasya Upanishad is realised by acting in the spirit of the 18th chapter of the Srimad Bhagavat Gita, free from delusion, free from ego, free from personal desire, free from any attachment. Then, we cease to be, and the Lord operates in and through us, and our life becomes transformed into a perennial devotion, adoration and Yoga. That is meditation in action.

With the sharing of these thoughts based upon the eighteenth chapter of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita which takes us back to the first two Shlokas of the Isavasya Upanishad, and to have the company of Sadhakas, Jignasus and Bhagavat Bhaktas is not an ordinary good fortune, it is a Parama Soubhagya. Thanking the Supreme Being for having graciously bestowed

upon me this Parama Soubhagya and thanking you all for your divine presence and your patient hearing, I conclude these three days of Jnana Yajna at the feet of the Lord as my Pushpanjali. God's grace, Guru Kripa Kataaksha and the Ashirvad of all saints be upon you and grant you success in your striving after the goal both secular as well as spiritual. God bless you all.

Hari Om Tat Sat!

