

Chapter 6: Aatma Samnyan Yoga – The Yoga of Self Discipline

This chapter is called '*Aatma Samnyan Yoga*', or 'Yoga of self-Discipline'. It is also known as '*Dhyaan Yoga*' or 'Yoga of Meditation'. When a person, before the performance of an action, abandons the fruits of the performance of action, and these actions are taken to be one's duty (that has to be performed), then such a person can be termed a Samnyasi (follower of the path of Yoga of Renunciation of Action). He is also entitled to be called a YOGI (True follower of the path towards God Realisation).

Without abandoning the desire for fruit, no action can be termed as a *samnyas* and neither as *Karma Yoga*. One can be labeled as a *Karma Yogi* only when one has abandoned even the thoughts of desire of any fruit of one's action. A person who is interested to enjoy the senses, through the sense organs dwelling on their objects, can never be termed as a Karma Yogi. He is performing actions for his enjoyment and is therefore a slave of his senses.

The verses in this chapter are invigorating and mind opening, so much so that when they are followed in everyday life, a person who is an enjoyer of senses is soon transformed into a true meditator of God – a Yogi.

At that point of time (during meditation and as a practitioner of meditation subsequently), his sense organs forget about enjoyment and all his actions (with desire for fruit) are lost. He graduates from attachment to non-attachment. He, in such a state of being, is called *Yogaarudha*, that is well progressed on the path of Yoga (on board the flight towards achieving God).

The best way of achieving this state is for he who is residing in a quiet place, always remembering the Lord's name and form. He should have equal affinity for all persons, whether they are saints or sinners. He should be able to keep his mind, senses and body in a pure state. Such a person is then fit to be labelled as a *Yogi* (one who is on the path of attainment of God) or else he should be labelled as a *Bhogi* (one who is interested in enjoyment of the senses and performing actions only for him).

For meditation, a person should select a secluded holy place (by the bank of a river, courtyard of a temple, under a tree, even in one designated quiet room in a house), and for a seat, place a deer's skin (out of the deer which has died of a natural cause), bundle of hay and cloth. This seat should be neither too high nor too low. After being thus seated, he should meditate for the purification of his inner being. The waist, spinal column, neck and head should be in a straight line. The eyes should concentrate on the tip of the nose. The mind should be fixed on God. On regular practice, one will have the glimpse of God.

One will be able to understand death. There will be divine brightness shining in one's eyes.

Such a Yogi should not eat a lot of food and should not be absolutely hungry also. He should not sleep too much nor should he remain sleepless.

The practice of meditation should be increased gradually. Attempts to practice in a hurried manner cause obstruction rather than progress. When the mind starts to wander, it should be restrained and brought back to concentrate on God. A Karma yogi who regularly practices meditation is able to achieve supreme peace. Such a karma yogi is able to understand other people's happiness and unhappiness, as that of his own, with equal vision.

In this chapter, Arjuna inquires how the wandering mind can be controlled which is like the turbulent wind. The Lord said that the mind could be controlled by practice and by detachments (indifference to worldly objects) or '*vairaagya*'. Arjuna then asks as to what fate a person would have if he meets his death before he can complete his practice.

The Lord comforts Arjuna - that it is the special feature of karma yoga that if one's physical body's term is finished and meets its end, then in the next birth one is born into a family of devotees and circumstances are favourable for him to continue his practice from where he had left off. There is no degradation of that devotee. He has understanding of his goal of attaining God and again strives for perfection. Thus the process of perfection continues through many lives after which he attains the highest goal.

The person following the karma yoga is considered to be superior to ascetics, men of knowledge, and also men of action (sakaam or motivated), by the Lord who advises Arjuna to become a karma yogi. A karma yogi is considered to be the best, which, while fixing the mind devotedly in Lord Krishna, goes about performing his actions. Such a karma yogi is considered to be the most superior devotee, by the Lord.