

## BOOK XVIII

### ARJUNA SAID:

The truth of Renunciation, O mighty-armed one, I would learn of Thee, and of Resignation, with their difference, O Thou demon-slayer of flowing locks!

### THE MASTER SAID:

The renouncing of works done through desire, sages have called Renunciation; and the wise have declared that ceasing from all desire of personal reward for one's work is Resignation.

Some of those who follow after knowledge have declared that every work is to be abandoned, as being faulty; but others say that works of sacrifice, gifts and penance are not to be abandoned.

Learn therefore from Me the certain truth concerning Resignation, O best descendant of Bharata; for Resignation, O tiger of men, is declared to be of three kinds.

Works of sacrifice, gifts and penance are not to be abandoned, but are to be performed; for sacrifice, gifts and penance are the purifiers of those who seek wisdom. (5)

But even these works are to be performed with abandonment of attachment and the desire of reward; this, O son of Pritha, is My sure and excellent decision.

But the renunciation of necessary work is not right; the ceasing from such work comes of delusion, and is declared to be the fruit of Darkness.

Whoever ceases from any work through fear of bodily weariness, and saying: "it is painful," he, making the renunciation of Force, does not gain the fruit of renunciation.

Whatever necessary work is done, O Arjuna, from the thought that it ought to be done, without attachment or desire of reward, this is held to be the renunciation of Substance.

He hates not unhappy work, nor is attached to happy work, the wise renouncer, who is pervaded by Substance, whose doubts are cut. (10)

For it is impossible for an embodied being to abandon all work without exception; but he who has given up the love of reward, he indeed has made the true renunciation.

The fruit of works is threefold, desirable, or undesirable, or mixed; it follows those who have not abandoned desire, but not those who have made renunciation.

Learn from Me, O mighty-armed one, these five causes, which are declared in the Sankhya teaching, for the accomplishment of all works.

They are: the material instrument, the doer, the organ of whatever kind, the different impulses, and fifthly, Destiny.

Whatever work a man initiates, by body, speech or mind, whether it be righteous or the contrary, these are its five causes. (15)

As this is so, whoever views the Self, the lonely one, as the doer, he, confused in thought, sees not rightly through defect of understanding.

Whose nature is not selfish, whose vision is not stained, even though he slays the whole world, such a one kills not, nor is he subject to bondage.

The knowing, the thing to be known, the knower, make the threefold driving-power of works; the organ, the thing done, the doer, make the threefold content of works.

The knowing, the thing done, and the doer, divided threefold according to the powers, are declared according to the enumeration of the powers. Hear thou rightly these:

The knowledge whereby one eternal nature is perceived in all beings, undivided, though beings are divided, know that knowledge to be of Substance. (20)

But the knowledge which sees in all beings various natures according their variety, know that knowledge to be of Force.

But the knowledge which attaches itself to one thing, as though that were the whole, lacking the right motive, without true perception, narrow, know that to be of Darkness.

The work that is done because it is necessary, without attachment, without lust or hate, by one who seeks no reward, is declared to be the work of Substance.

But work done by one seeking his desire, and selfishly, and with abundant toil, is declared to be the work of Force.

What work is begun without regard for consequences, for the loss it may cause, or injury to others, or waste of power, through delusion, this is declared to be of Darkness. (25)

The doer who is free from attachment, without vanity, who has firmness and will, who is not changed by success or failure, such a one is declared to be of Substance.

The doer who is full of desire, who seeks the reward of his works, who is greedy, who harms others and is impure, who falls into exultation or sorrow, is famed to be of Force.

The doer who is without union, brutish, conceited, malignant, unfair, slothful, despondent, temporising, is declared to be of Darkness.

Hear thou the division of understanding and of firmness, threefold according to the powers, declared completely according to their differences, O conqueror of wealth.

The understanding which knows action and abstention, what is to be done, what left undone, what is to be feared and what not, and also bondage and freedom, that, O son of Pritha, is of Substance. (30)

The understanding which distinguishes not truly between law and lawlessness, what should and should not be done, is of Force, O son of Pritha.

The understanding which, enwrapped in darkness, sees the unlawful as lawful, and all things as opposite to their true nature, that, O son of Pritha, is of Darkness.

The firmness whereby one firmly holds the emotional nature, and the actions of the life-powers, unwavering in union, that, O son of Pritha, is the firmness of Substance.

But the firmness, O Arjuna, whereby one desiring reward holds firmly to duty, desire, riches, that, O son of Pritha, is the firmness of Force.

But the firmness through which one of foolish mind will not let go dreams, fears, grief, despondency, arrogance, that, O son of Pritha, is of Darkness. (35)

Hear now from Me the three kinds of happiness, O bull of the Bharatas, through following which one finds delight, and makes an end of pain.

That which at the beginning is as poison, but in the outcome is like nectar, that is the happiness of Substance, springing from clear vision of the Soul.

The happiness which springs from the union of the senses with the objects of desire, in the beginning like nectar, but in the outcome like poison, that is declared to be the happiness of Force.

The happiness which, in the beginning, and to the end, causes blindness to the Soul, springing from sleep, sloth, negligence, that is declared to be of Darkness.

Neither on earth, nor in heaven, nor among the gods is there any being which is free from these Three Powers born of Nature. (40)

The works of Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra, O consumer of the foe, are apportioned according to the powers inherent in the character of each.

Peace, control, penance, purity, patience, and also rectitude, wisdom, knowledge, affirmative faith, are the Brahman's work, according to his nature.

Heroism, fire, firmness, skill, and refusal to flee in battle, giving of gifts, governing, are the works of the Kshatriya, according to his nature.

Ploughing, tending cattle, commerce, are the natural work of the Vaishya; work which consists in service is the natural work of the Shudra.

By devotion each to his own work, every man gains true success; how each finds success through devotion to his own work, learn thou: (45)

From Whom all beings come, by Whom all this is stretched forth, Him honoring, each by his own work, the son of man finds success.

Better is one's own duty even without excellence than the duty of another well carried out; doing the work imposed by one's own nature, he incurs no sin.

Let not a man withdraw from his natural work, O son of Kunti, even if it be faulty; for all initiatives are subject to fault, as fire is wrapped in smoke.

With thought everywhere unattached, self-conquered, from longing free, through renunciation he gains supreme success, free from bondage to works.

And how, having gained success, he gains the Eternal, learn thou of Me, hearing briefly, O son of Kunti, what is the supreme seat of wisdom. (50)

With soul-vision kept pure, firmly self-controlled, detached from sounds and other sense-objects, and discarding lust and hate;

Seeking solitude, eating little, with speech, body and mind controlled, given up to union through soul-vision, following ever after dispassion;

Getting free from vanity, violence, pride, lust, wrath, avarice, without desire of possessions, full of peace, he builds for union with the Eternal.

Become one with the Eternal, with soul at peace, he grieves not nor desires; equal toward all beings, he gains highest love of Me.

Through love he learns Me truly, how great and what I am; then knowing Me truly, he straightway enters that Supreme. (55)

Even continuing to perform all works, taking refuge in Me, through My grace he gains that everlasting home.

In heart renouncing all works in Me, devoted to Me, following after union through soul-vision, keep thy heart ever set on Me.

With heart set on Me, through My grace thou shalt cross through all rough places. But if through vanity thou wilt not hearken to Me, thou shalt perish.

When through self-assertion thou thinkest: "I will not fight!" thy determination is a delusion, for Nature will constrain thee.

Bound, O son of Kunti, by thine own natural work, what thou desirest not to do through thy delusion, thou shalt do against thy will. (60)

The Lord dwells in the heart of every creature, O Arjuna, through His divine power moving all beings, as though guided by mechanism.

Take refuge in Him with thy whole heart, O descendant of Bharata; through His grace thou shalt gain supreme peace, the everlasting resting-place.

Thus to thee that wisdom which is more secret than all secrets is declared by Me; fully pondering on it, as thou desirest, so do!

Hear further My ultimate word, most secret of all; thou art exceeding dear to Me, therefore will I speak what is good for thee.

Set thy heart on Me, full of love for Me, sacrificing to Me, make obeisance to Me, and thou shalt come to Me; this is truth I promise thee, for thou art dear to Me. (65)

Putting aside all other duties, come for refuge to Me alone; grieve not, for I shall set thee free from all sins.

This is never to be told by thee to him who is without fervor, without love, to him who seeks not to hear it, or who cavils at Me.

Whosoever shall declare this supreme secret in the company of those who love Me, showing the highest love for Me, he shall certainly come to Me.

Nor does any among mankind do aught dearer to Me than he; nor shall any in the world be dearer to Me than he.

And whosoever shall study this righteous converse of Me and thee, such a one sacrifices to Me the sacrifice of wisdom; such is My thought. (70)

And whosoever shall hear it, full of faith and without cavil, he also, set free, will gain the shining worlds of those of holy works.

Say then, O son of Pritha, whether thou hast listened in singleness of heart; say whether thy delusion of unwisdom is destroyed, O conqueror of wealth!

**ARJUNA SAID:**

Gone is my delusion; I have come to right remembrance through Thy grace, O unfallen one! I stand, with my doubts gone. I shall fulfil thy word!

**SANJAYA SAID:**

Thus did I hear the converse of the son of Vasudeva and the mighty-souled son of Pritha, marvellous, causing the hair to stand erect with wonder.

Through Vyasa's grace I heard this supreme secret, this union, from the Lord of union, Krishna himself, relating it. (75)

O king, ever and anon remembering this marvellous converse, this holy talk between him of the flowing locks and Arjuna, I exult again and again.

And ever and anon remembering Lord Hari's marvellous form, great dismay comes on me, O king, and I exult again and again.

Wherever are Krishna, Lord of union, and Pritha's son, bearer of the bow, there are fortune, victory, blessing and steadfast law; this I maintain.

**THUS THE BHAGAVAD GITA IS COMPLETED.**

**MAY IT BE WELL WITH ALL BEINGS!**