



श्रीमद्भगवद् गीता
पञ्चमोऽध्यायः - संन्यास योगः
Chapter 5
Volume 2

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Because of the pressures and confusion which arose in Arjuna's mind, by virtue of the situation in which he found himself in the battlefield, the thought of taking up to a life of Sanyasa, a life of renunciation of all worldly pursuits has been clinging on to the mind of Arjuna from the very beginning. We may recall Arjuna's words in chapter 2

गुरुनहत्वाहि महानुभवान् श्रेयो भोक्तुं भैक्ष्यमपीह लोके ।
हत्वाऽर्थ कामांस्तु गुरुनिहैव भुञ्जीय भोगान् रुधिर प्रदिग्धान् ॥

"भीष्म and द्रोण are not my enemies, nor do they consider myself to be their enemy. Still we have to face each other as enemies in this battlefield. Why is it so? Why is it that भीष्म and द्रोण are on the other side? Whatever is the reason, it is their problem. For me, they are my teachers, always worthy of worship. For me, it is श्रेयस्, it is absolutely



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the best, if I could take to a lifestyle of a **संन्यासी** and live on **भिक्षा** – live on alms in this world, without killing the respected teachers, rather than killing them and enjoying the royal pleasures of a kingdom gained through a blood-stained victory”.

These thoughts have been lingering in the mind of Arjuna ever since the **गीत उपदेश** started in Chapter 2. It is only these thoughts which prompted Arjuna in the beginning of this chapter to ask Krishna the question "between **संन्यास** and **कर्मयोग**, which is the best for me to follow". Since **संन्यास** is an accepted and respected way of life in the Sanatana Dharma, taking up a life of **संन्यास** appears to Arjuna as a possible and also a proper means to solve his immediate problem.

Similar thoughts, in different forms, occur to every human being at some time or another in one's life. Therefore Arjuna's problem is a deep-rooted human problem.

Sri Krishna knows the needs of Arjuna exactly. In order to teach Arjuna the real meaning of **संन्यास**, namely, that a real **संन्यासी** is a **ज्ञानी**, and the **कर्म** of a **ज्ञानी** is wisdom rooted in **ब्रह्मज्ञानं**, and that such **कर्म** is neither opposed to, nor essentially different from, the **कर्म** of a **कर्मयोगी** - in order to convey that message to Arjuna, Sri Krishna says

सांख्ययोगौ पृथक् बालाः प्रवदन्ति न पण्डिताः ।
एकंअपि आस्थितः सम्यक् उभयोः विन्दते फलं ॥

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कर्म संन्यास – though it is also popularly called **संन्यास**, is not **real संन्यास** or **absolute संन्यास**. **कर्म संन्यास** is essentially a lifestyle of choice or will, in which one deliberately gives up certain worldly activities as a matter of discipline in order to concentrate one's time and efforts in some kind of spiritual pursuit of one's own choice.

On the other hand, the real **संन्यास** is only **ज्ञान कर्म संन्यास** – which is wisdom in action, and that is Self-realized **ब्रह्मज्ञानं** expressing itself as action. Such **ब्रह्मज्ञानं** is called **सांख्यं**, and those who are the very embodiment of such **सांख्यं** are said to be in **सांख्य योग**, which is the same as **ज्ञान योग**.

Thus **सांख्य योग** is only for **ज्ञानीs** - those who have realized **ब्रह्मज्ञानं**, those who are totally free from **अहंकार** and **कर्तृभाव**, which means those who are totally free from



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egoism and the notion of being the कर्ता of a कर्म. For a सांख्य योगी, there is no such thing as doing a कर्म or giving up any कर्म.

A सांख्य योगी is a ज्ञानी - a true सन्यासी who recognizes परमेश्वर in every कर्म as the very manifestation of परमेश्वर, as the very Glory of परमेश्वर. Such recognition is also the ultimate goal of कर्मयोग. Thus, in terms of the ultimate goal of life, सांख्य योग and कर्मयोग - true सांख्य योग and कर्मयोग, are not only not different from each other, but also they are indeed one and the same. Therefore भगवान् says

सांख्य योगौ पृथक् बालाः प्रवदन्ति न पण्डिताः - only बालाः, the children, the children in terms of knowledge - ज्ञानं, ब्रह्मज्ञानं. Those who know only the words of the Vedas and the Upanishads and not their real content, are called here as बालाः - children, in contrast to पण्डिताः - the learned people who understand both the words as well as the contents of the Vedas and the Upanishads. भगवान् says here:

बालाः, न पण्डिताः, सांख्य योगौ पृथक् प्रवदन्ति - Only children, not learned people, explain सांख्य योग and कर्मयोग as different from each other. Only people with a superficial knowledge of the Vedas and the Upanishads leave you with an impression, by their explanations, that सांख्य योग and कर्मयोग are opposed to each other, leading you into different directions. The truth is:

एकं अपि सम्यक् आस्थितः उभयोः विन्दते फलं - The one who is a सम्यक् आस्थितः - very well established एकं अपि - in either of them

उभयोः विन्दते फलं - enjoys the fruits of both, realizes the joy of both.

The truth is, the one who is very well established either in सन्यास योग or कर्मयोग, which means either in true सांख्य योग or कर्मयोग, that person enjoys the fruits of both.

A सांख्य योगी, a ज्ञानी, a true सन्यासी as well as the one who is a कर्मयोगी - the one endowed with कर्मयोग attitude and प्रसाद बुद्धि in all actions, enjoys the same joy and peace, because,

यत् सांख्यैः प्राप्यते स्थानं, तत् योगैः अपि गम्यते ।

एकं सांख्यं च योगं च यः पश्यति सः पश्यति ॥

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यत् स्थानं सांख्यैः प्राप्यते - That state of existence in which the सांख्य योगीs - true संन्यासीs - the ज्ञानीs - the wise ones find themselves.

तत् स्थानं योगैः अपि गम्यते - That state of existence is ultimately reached by the कर्मयोगीs also.

The state of bliss - the state of joy, peace and freedom which is right now enjoyed by सांख्य योगीS, the wise ones, that state of bliss - joy, peace and freedom is ultimately reached by कर्मयोगीs also. Therefore, in terms of ultimate destination - the परम पुरुषार्थ - the श्रेयस् the मोक्ष - the difference between the state of existence of a ज्ञानी and that of a कर्मयोगी is not one of a kind, but it is only one of distance in time. In terms of the ultimate goal of life, सांख्य योग and कर्मयोग are indeed one, not पृथक् - not different. Therefore भगवान् says:

एकं सांख्यं च योगं च - सांख्य योग and कर्मयोग, which means सर्वकर्म संन्यास and सर्वकर्म योग are indeed एकं - one and the same, in terms of the ultimate goal of human existence.

यः पश्यति सः पश्यति - The one who sees this identity, the one who realizes this identity, that person alone understands the true nature of संन्यास and कर्मयोग.

In terms of the ultimate goal of human existence, there is एकत्वं - identity between true संन्यास and कर्मयोग. The one who recognizes this identity in practice, that person alone can enjoy either and can enjoy both. For such a person there can be no मोह or शोक - no delusion or confusion, no sorrow or distress.

कर्मयोग is ज्ञान प्राप्ति उपाय - the means for realizing ज्ञानं, the means for moving totally towards the supreme goal of life, and संन्यास is ज्ञाननिष्ठ - being at the supreme goal of life. Whether you are moving totally towards the ultimate goal or whether you are already at that goal, you enjoy the same bliss, which is the expression of both.

As Sri Krishna pointed out earlier in Chapter 2, the लक्षणs - the distinguishing characteristics of a कर्मयोगी and ज्ञानी (the स्थितप्रज्ञ) are the same. For a कर्मयोगी,



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these लक्षणs are साधनं - means of endeavour for reaching the goal, and for a ज्ञानी, who is already at that goal, these लक्षणs are natural and spontaneous.

If संन्यास and कर्मयोग have the same goal, why not go after संन्यास straight away rather than go through कर्मयोग? The answer is that one cannot gain संन्यास without going through कर्मयोग. Therefore, भगवान् says:

संन्यासस्तु महाबाहो दुःखमाप्तुं अयोगतः ।

योगयुक्तः मुनिर्ब्रह्म नचिरेण अधिगच्छति ॥

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महाबाहो – O! Mighty armed Arjuna, you are a क्षत्रिय both by गुण and कर्म; राजस् गुण is your predominant nature, and being so, you are a man of action. You can naturally exhaust your प्रारब्ध कर्मs only through action. On the other hand,

संन्यासः तु – the real संन्यास, the ज्ञानकर्म संन्यास – the संन्यास that is wisdom in action, that kind of संन्यास,

दुःखं आप्तुं अयोगतः - it is very difficult to gain without prior कर्मयोग

Without prior कर्मयोग, it is very difficult to reach the state of ज्ञानकर्म संन्यास, which is the state of real संन्यास. One can reach that state, but it is very difficult to do so, especially for a person like you, who is a well-born, deep-rooted क्षत्रिय both by गुण and कर्म. The कर्म संन्यास, way of life is not conducive for your goal of gaining the श्रेयस् that you seek. On the other hand,

योगयुक्तः – कर्मयोग युक्तः – through the कर्मयोग way of life, through a life of कर्म-कर्तव्यं कर्म-दैवमाह्निकं कर्म-ईश्वर आराधन कर्म-ईश्वर अर्पित कर्म-नियतं कुरु कर्म through कर्म which is not propelled by राग and द्वेष, likes and dislikes, through such कर्मयोग coupled with

मुनिः – श्रुतिज्ञान मननं, स्वाध्याय प्रवचनं – through constant reflection on the content of the sounds and words of the Upanishads

नचिरेण- क्षिप्रं एव-शीघ्रं एव – fairly quickly, far more quickly than what is possible through कर्मसंन्यास way of life

ब्रह्म अधिगच्छति – one can reach the state of ब्रह्मन्. One can reach the परमपुरुषार्थ - the श्रेयस् - the supreme goal of life - total fulfillment in life.



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It is very difficult to gain मोक्ष without prior कर्मयोग. On the other hand, through कर्मयोग, you will gain मोक्ष much sooner, and that is certain. Therefore, set your mind on कर्मयोग as the means for gaining the state of real संन्यास, which is itself मोक्ष. This is essentially Sri Krishna's answer to Arjuna's opening question.

As we may note, in answering Arjuna's question, Sri Krishna has not talked much about कर्म संन्यास, apparently because Arjuna's need at this time is only knowledge about कर्म योग. But Arjuna brings his question again in a different form in the beginning of Chapter 18, where Sri Krishna deals with his question extensively and completely, as we will see later.

Drawing Arjuna's attention to कर्मयोग again, भगवान् points out what कर्म योग does to a person, how a कर्म योगी evolves into a ज्ञानी. भगवान् says:

योगयुक्तो विशुद्धात्मा, विजितात्मा जितेन्द्रियः ।
सर्वभूतात्मभूतात्मा, कुर्वन्नपि न लिप्यते ॥ 5 - 7

योगयुक्तः विशुद्धात्मा भवति - योग युक्तः - The one who is very well established in कर्मयोग, becomes a विशुद्धात्मा - one free from impurities in one's अन्तःकरण - mind and बुद्धि. If one is a slave to one's own राग-द्वेष forces - forces of likes and dislikes, then one's राग-द्वेष are the impurities in one's mind and बुद्धि, because they are the causes for one's reactions. If the अन्तःकरण is insulated against reactions, by the attitude of प्रसाद बुद्धि, which is what कर्मयोग is, then the अन्तःकरण is free from the hold of राग-द्वेष forces. Such a person is called विशुद्धात्मा.

Thus योगयुक्तः विशुद्धात्मा भवति - the one who is very well established in कर्मयोग becomes a विशुद्धात्मा - one free from the hold of one's राग-द्वेष forces. Such a योगयुक्तः विशुद्धात्मा,

विजितात्मा, भवति - such a योगयुक्तः विशुद्धात्मा then becomes a विजितात्मा - one who never comes under the spells of काम, क्रोध and लोभ - passing fancies of the mind, anger and greed. Such a योगयुक्तः विशुद्धात्मा विजितात्मा,



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जितेन्द्रियः भवति - then becomes जितेन्द्रियः - one who is naturally a disciplined person with absolute mastery over one's organs of perception and action, including mind and बुद्धि.

Such a person is never susceptible to any impulsive or reactionary thought, word or deed. For such a person, actions which are right and necessary always take place spontaneously, and actions which are improper, naturally never take place.

When such a person is also engaged in स्वाध्याय प्रवचनं - daily pursuit of ब्रह्मज्ञानं through the three-fold process of प्रणिपातनं - परिप्रश्नं and सेवा through श्रवणं-मननं and निदिध्यासनं, as Sri Krishna described earlier, such a person naturally uplifts oneself to the state of a ज्ञानी - a true संन्यासी, and realizes oneself to be a सर्वभूतात्म भूतात्मा- "I am indeed the Self of all that exists - the Self in myself is also the Self in every self"

That realization is Self-realization and that is मोक्ष - freedom from every kind of bondage, sorrow and distress. When a person reaches that state

कुर्वन्नपि न लिप्यते - even while performing actions, the person is not bound by any actions. The person is not affected by doership or enjoyership, कर्तृत्वं or भोक्तृत्वं. Such Self-realization is ज्ञानं - wisdom. Such state of existence is real संन्यास - and a person in this state is a ज्ञान योगी - a सर्वकर्म संन्यासी. Further describing such a self-realized person, such a ज्ञानी, भगवान् says:

नैव किञ्चित् करोमीति, युक्तो मन्येत तत्त्ववित् ।

पश्यन् शृण्वन् स्पृशन् जिघ्रन् अश्नन् गच्छन् स्वपन् श्वसन् ॥ 5 - 8

प्रलपन् विसृजन् गृह्णन् उन्मिषन् निमिषन् अपि ।

इन्द्रियाणि इन्द्रियार्थेषु र्वतन्त इति धारयन् ॥ 5 - 9

Such a Self-realized person is a तत्त्ववित्, - ज्ञानी, संन्यासी even though engaged in all kinds of activities such as :



पश्यन्-श्रुण्वन्-स्पृशन्-जिघ्रन्-अश्नन्-गच्छन्-स्वपन्-श्वासन्-प्रलपन्-विसृजन्-गृह्णन्-उन्मिषन्-
निमिषन् अपि-

पश्यन् seeing

श्रुण्वन् -hearing

स्पृशन् - touching

जिघ्रन् - smelling

अश्नन् - tasting

गच्छन् - going

स्वपन् - sleeping

श्वासन् - breathing

प्रलपन् - speaking

विसृजन् - dropping, letting things go

गृह्णन् - seizing, getting hold of things

उन्मिषन् - opening the eyes

निमिषन् - closing the eyes and such other involuntary actions

अपि - even though one may be doing all these actions

युक्तः तत्त्ववित् मन्येत - a Self realized person, a ज्ञानयोगी, a संन्यासी, realizes clearly

न एव किञ्चित् करोमि इति - I, the Self in myself, do nothing at all

इन्द्रियाणि इन्द्रियार्थेषु र्वतन्त इति - the organs of perception and action, including mind and बुद्धि each one of them is doing its job, as each one of them is endowed to do, by the Grace of परमेश्वर

इति धारयन् - so it is clear to the तत्त्ववित् - the ज्ञानी.

Thus a ज्ञानी realizes the true nature of oneself - the true nature of "I" as distinct from one's body-complex and its actions. One's body-complex is an assemblage of various components, working together to do various kinds of activities that each component is naturally endowed to do.

Now, all these bodily activities like seeing, hearing, touching, etc., and indeed every kind of कर्म that this body-mind-intellect complex does every day of one's life - all these



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कर्मs are meant for whom? Not for one's body-complex itself. They are really meant to serve the master who dwells in this body-complex and who is independent of this body-complex. That master is "I" – The Atma, the Self in oneself, the परमेश्वर in oneself.

Just as a house, which is an assemblage of various components, is not meant for the house itself, but it is really meant to serve the master who dwells in the house, and who is independent of the house, similarly every कर्म of this body-mind-intellect complex is meant only to serve the will of परमेश्वर already in oneself as "I", as the Self - as the आत्मा - as the master dwelling in this body complex.

This knowledge is naturally realized by a कर्मयोगी as he or she progressively evolves into a ज्ञानी- a Real संन्यासी. Such is the potential of कर्मयोग, so says Sri Krishna. Later on in Chapter 11, Sri Krishna tells Arjuna

निमित्तमात्रं भाव सव्यसाचिन्

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Recognize yourself only as an instrument to serve the will of परमेश्वर. Gaining the ability for such recognition is one's primary duty to oneself, because it is such recognition that ultimately leads one to the mental disposition of पूण ईश्वर शरणागति - total surrender to परमेश्वर, which is necessary for gaining श्रेयस् - total fulfillment in life - the state of being a ज्ञानी, a true संन्यासी.

It is कर्मयोग that enables one to gain that ability - to gain the disposition of being in service to परमेश्वर at all times, to gain the disposition of पूण ईश्वर शरणागति in thought, word and deed at all times, and ultimately gain श्रेयस् - total fulfillment in life. That is what कर्मयोग does to a person, and that is the message of Sri Krishna today.

We will continue next time.