



श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता
पञ्चमोऽध्यायः - संन्यास योगः
Chapter 5
Volume 3

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Sri Krishna has been talking about कर्मयोग, and how through कर्मयोग one progressively evolves into a ज्ञानी, which is the state of a real संन्यास, namely ज्ञान कर्म संन्यास or ज्ञानयोग. A ज्ञानी recognizes clearly that whatever कर्म one does, it is not meant to serve one's body-mind-intellect complex itself, or one's ego, or one's likes and dislikes, but every कर्म, without exception, is meant only to serve the will of परमेश्वर, already in oneself as "I" - the Self – the आत्मा.

It is only the कर्मयोग way of life that enables one to gain such recognition, to gain the mental disposition of being in service to परमेश्वर at all times. Hence it is important for one to understand clearly and fully the nature and potentialities of कर्मयोग, as the means for gaining श्रेयस् - the परम पुरुषार्थ - the supreme goal of total fulfillment in life. Therefore, talking about कर्मयोग again, भगवान् says,

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| ब्रह्मणि आधाय कर्माणि संगं त्यक्त्वा करोति यः । लिप्यते न स पापेन पद्मपत्रं इव अम्भसा ॥ | 5 - 10 |
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ब्रह्मचिद्या **Brahma Vidya**

ब्रह्मणि आधाय कर्माणि - Dedicating all actions to परमेश्वर

संगं त्यक्त्वा - Giving up all attachments to कर्म and कर्मफल - actions and their results

करोति यः - the one who does all कर्मs in that manner, in the manner of a कर्मयोगी

सः - that person

पापेन न लिप्यते - is untouched by - is untainted by पाप. As the Upanishad says: न

कर्म लिप्यते नरे - actions do not touch, actions do not stain, actions do not bind that person.

पद्मपत्रं इव अम्भसा - Just as lotus leaf is untouched by water.

Let us now see this verse in some detail. Sri Krishna is talking about a कर्मयोगी. A कर्मयोगी is not yet a ज्ञानी - a self-realized person. Therefore for a कर्मयोगी there is still जीव-ईश्वर-भेद - a distance between himself and ईश्वर. ईश्वर is still someone away from himself. A कर्मयोगी considers that he is still the कर्ता of a कर्म - the doer of an action. Whatever कर्म he does, he naturally thinks "I am the कर्ता of the कर्म - I am the doer of the कर्म ". Then how does he do the कर्म ?

ब्रह्मणि आधाय सः कर्माणि करोति - He does the कर्म as dedication to परमेश्वर, which means that he does ईश्वरार्थ कर्म, he does कर्म for the sake of परमेश्वर. He offers all his कर्मs to परमेश्वर and receives the कर्मफल, whatever they are, as ईश्वर प्रसाद, as the very Grace of परमेश्वर.

Now, as a कर्मयोगी, how can I offer something to an unknown परमेश्वर ? That is possible only in terms of धर्म, as pointed out by the Vedas - the वेद उपदेश - मंत्रs. I look upon Vedas as ब्रह्मणो-मुखं - as the words of परमेश्वर itself. The वेद-उपदेश-मंत्रs-when properly understood, tell me the विहित-कर्म - the कर्मs to be done.

Therefore, as a कर्मयोगी, the Vedas enjoin me to certain duties such as सत्यं वद, धर्म चर, स्वाध्यायात् मा प्रमदः, etc. Be truthful in thought, word and deed at all times. Follow धर्म - propriety in action at all times. Never be indifferent or negligent with respect to the regular study and constant practice of our scriptural teachings, etc. As a कर्मयोगी, I look upon the above वेद-उपदेश-मंत्रs as ईश्वर आदेशः - as the command words of परमेश्वर



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for an ईश्वर-भक्त - a devotee of परमेश्वर. I simply obey the command words of परमेश्वर, just as a servant obeys the command of his master.

In my particular case, my master is परमेश्वर and परमेश्वर only, and I simply obey His commands. I have nothing to do either with the कर्मs that I do, or with their results. I am only the servant of my master, nothing more, nothing less. Being so is called ब्रह्मणि आधाय कर्माणि - dedicating all actions to परमेश्वर.

Further, ordinarily it appears as though that I do actions as warranted in my situations from time to time. As a कर्मयोगी, each situation itself is a manifestation of परमेश्वर for me, because my situation is a result of my प्रारब्ध-कर्म - the कर्मफल of my past कर्मs. Since परमेश्वर is the कर्म-फल-दाता, the giver of the fruits of all actions, every situation in which I find myself, is itself a manifestation of परमेश्वर. Therefore, the action that is warranted by each situation is also a manifestation of परमेश्वर. Consequently, any action that I do, is only obeying ईश्वर आज्ञा - the order of my master - परमेश्वर. That is why I always remind myself every time that I do something

कायेन वाचा मनसेन्द्रियैर्वा, बुद्ध्यात्मना वा प्रकृतेस्वभावात् ।
करोमि यद्यत् सकलं परस्मै, नारायणायेति समर्पयामि ॥

Whatever I do, by thought word or deed, I offer it to Sri Narayana – the परमेश्वर. Since the कर्म is dedicated to परमेश्वर, the result of that कर्म also belongs to परमेश्वर only. I have nothing to do with the results. Therefore,

संगं त्यक्त्वा – I seek no results for my actions, no results whatsoever, including मोक्ष. The action that is offered to परमेश्वर, that is dedicated to परमेश्वर, is not an investment for gaining any result. I do not pray for मोक्ष through any action. मोक्ष is already in every one of us. It is not the result of any action.

The result of कर्मयोग is the elimination of अशुद्ध - impurities in the mind. When the impurities are removed, what is left is a mind which is naturally and originally pure, fit for मोक्ष.



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सः पापेन न लिप्यते - Such a pure mind is untouched by पाप, which means दुःख - sorrow and distress of any kind, even while being in the midst of every kind of sorrow and distress, just as a lotus leaf.

पद्मपत्रं इव अम्भसा - A lotus leaf is rooted in water, lives on water and is even partly submerged in water, yet, it is not wetted by water. Not only that, it gives a glow even to the muddy drops of water on it. Similarly, a कर्मयोगी by being what he is, brings glory to the situation in which he is, and to the society in which he lives, without ever being contaminated by any kind of दुःख - sorrow and distress which may be around him.

Describing the कर्मयोगी again, भगवान् says:

कायेन मनसा बुद्ध्या केवलैः इन्द्रियैरपि ।

योगीनः कर्म कुर्वन्ति संगं त्यक्त्वा आत्मशुद्धये ॥

5 - 11

योगिनः कर्मकुर्वन्ति - The कर्मयोगीs perform कर्मs, How?

संगं त्यक्त्वा - Giving up their attachments to the कर्मफलs - results of their actions, which means they perform कर्मs with total readiness to accept the results of their actions, whatever they are, as ईश्वर प्रसाद - as the very Grace of परमेश्वर.

If they do not seek the fruits of actions, then what for do they do कर्मs? They do कर्मs for the only purpose for which कर्मs are intended, namely

आत्मशुद्धये - for self-purification, for अन्तःकरण शुद्धि - for cleansing the mind and बुद्धि, for releasing the mind and बुद्धि from the enslaving powers of one's राग and द्वेष - likes and dislikes.

Now, we must understand that अन्तःकरण शुद्धि by itself is not a कर्मफल. It is not the result of any particular action. It is the result of कर्मयोग attitude. By the कर्मयोग attitude, whenever the enslaving powers of राग and द्वेष on one's mind and बुद्धि are removed, what is left is only pure mind and बुद्धि, which means that the mind and बुद्धि are originally pure. The accumulated dust on them are the enslaving powers of राग-द्वेष. The कर्मयोग attitude serves as a cleansing agent to remove this dust. Therefore, the



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कर्मयोगीs perform actions, not for gaining any particular results, but only for the natural removal of the enslaving powers of राग-द्वेष on one's mind and बुद्धि.

How do they perform actions so that the above result is naturally accomplished? That is said in the first line of the verse.

कायेन मनसा बुद्ध्या केवलैः इन्द्रियैः अपि

कायेन - by the physical body

मनसा - by the mind

बुद्ध्या - by the बुद्धि and

इन्द्रियैः अपि - and also by the various

इन्द्रिया s - organs of perception and action

Everybody performs actions by कायेन, मनसा, बुद्ध्या, इन्द्रियैः अपि - by the physical body, mind, बुद्धि and the various organs of perception and action. Then what is special about a कर्मयोगी? What is special about a कर्मयोगी is that all his actions are governed by what is indicated by the word केवलैः - which literally means "only". With respect to the कर्म of a कर्मयोगी, the word केवलैः means ममत्व चर्जितैः केवलैः : entirely free from the notion of मम - mine.

The physical body, the mind, the बुद्धि, and all the organs of perception and action are only instruments for action. The action itself is totally free from ममत्वं - the notion of mine. ममत्व बुद्धि is the बुद्धि, which says that the कर्म is mine, and hence the कर्मफल is also mine. For a कर्म योगी, there is no ममत्व बुद्धि, because there is no मम कर्म.

That is why, in every यज्ञ कर्म one explicitly reminds oneself again and again "इदं न मम - this कर्म is not my कर्म. The कर्म does not belong to me. The कर्म that I do is ईश्वर आदेश. It is being done under orders from my Master. My body, mind and intellect are only an instrument to carry out the command of परमेश्वर. Thus neither कर्म nor कर्मफल belongs to me. Whatever I do, whether it is by my body, mind or intellect, or by the various organs of perception and action, both the actions and the results of the action belong only to परमेश्वर. " That is the meaning of केवल (only) and that is the attitude of a कर्मयोगी.



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By such कर्मयोग attitude, when one overcomes the hold of राग-द्वेष forces on one's mind and intellect, one gains शान्ति - Peace, which means one's mind becomes naturally contemplative. Then संन्यास - renunciation of actions becomes natural to one in terms of ज्ञान - wisdom, which means that कर्मयोग evolves into कर्म संन्यास योग. When such कर्म संन्यास योग is further strengthened by the वेद उपदेश मंत्रs , सत्यं वद, धर्मं चर, स्वाध्यायात् मा प्रमदः - etc. in daily life, together with श्रवणं, मननं, and निदिध्यासनं, प्रणिपातनं, परिप्रश्नं, and सेव as said before, one progressively merges into a state of ज्ञान कर्म संन्यास योग or ज्ञानयोग which is the state of real संन्यास. Therefore, Sri Krishna continues:

युक्तः कर्म फलं त्यक्त्वा, शान्तिं आप्नोति नैष्ठिकीं ।

अयुक्तः कामकारेण, फले सक्तो निबध्यते ॥

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युक्त : - Sri Krishna uses the word युक्त : so many times in the भगवत् गीता. Generally युक्तः means the one who has mastered the effective practice of a technique. In the context here, युक्त : means कर्मयोग युक्तः, the one who has mastered the effective practice of कर्मयोग, which means the one who is well rooted in the realization " I perform कर्म as ईश्वर आदेशः, ईश्वर आराधन, ईश्वर अर्पणं. Both the कर्म and कर्मफल belong only to परमेश्वर, and as such, my mind is at Peace – समाहित चित्तः - in thought, word and deed. I have no conflicts whatsoever.

The one who has such realization is कर्मयोग युक्तः. Such a person is

कर्मफलं त्यक्त्वा means कर्मफलं अर्पयित्वा - by offering both the कर्म and कर्मफल at the altar of परमेश्वर

युक्तः शान्तिं आप्नोति - the कर्मयोगी gains peace of mind and naturally matures to a state of contemplative mood and कर्मसंन्यास योग. Subsequently

नैष्ठिकीं शान्तिं आप्नोति - he gains the peace arising from ज्ञान निष्ठा - enlightened wisdom.



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A कर्मयोगी thus naturally grows in wisdom through every action, whatever be its results, because every result is ईश्वर प्रसाद. The peace of mind gained by the attitude of प्रसाद बुद्धि helps the कर्मयोगी to learn from past experience and be wiser in future actions.

More often, one never learns from past experience. That is because one keeps reacting. A कर्मयोगी acts, but never reacts. A mind that reacts has nothing to do with wisdom. A reacting mind does not learn. More than that, whatever wisdom one may already have, it does not become available when one reacts. Reaction never helps because it can never absorb the sanction from wisdom. In कर्मयोग there is never any loss. In fact, one gains all the composure that one needs to correct oneself and be wiser. Therefore,

युक्तः कर्मफलं त्यक्त्वा शान्तिं आप्नोति नैष्ठिकी - The one who has effectively mastered the practice of कर्मयोग in daily life, gains the tranquility born of the कर्मयोग attitude and प्रसाद बुद्धि, and progressively matures into wisdom in action. On the other hand,

अयुक्तः - the one who does not have the कर्मयोग attitude

कामकारेण - impelled by काम - pushed by desires for various results of actions, worldly objects and experiences

फले सक्तः निबध्यते - gets more and more bound to the transient experiences of worldly life

The one who does not have the कर्मयोग attitude, the one who does not cultivate the कर्मयोग attitude, निबध्यते - surely gets bound to the कर्मफलs and ultimately loses one's own inherent freedom. In other words, such a person surely gets spiritually incapacitated. Therefore, भगवान् says,

युक्तः शान्तिं आप्नोति - The one who practices कर्मयोग enjoys peace; and

अयुक्तः निबध्यते - the one who has no कर्मयोग attitude surely gets bound to worldly objects and experiences and becomes spiritually incapacitated.

This is a **teaching** and **not a threat**. The object of the teaching is **to impart knowledge**.

युक्तः शान्तिं आप्नोति - The one who practices कर्मयोग enjoys peace, **that is knowledge**.



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अयुक्तः निबध्यते - The one who does not have the कर्मयोग attitude gets bound to संसार-सुख and दुःख of worldly life, **that is also knowledge.**

With this knowledge, you, as a human being, you are free to live as you like, and experience the consequences, so says Sri Krishna.

In the next few verses, भगवान् describes the लक्षण of a ज्ञानी - the distinguishing characteristics of a wise person. The लक्षणs of a ज्ञानी are being indicated in every chapter of भगवत् गीता, so that a कर्मयोगी can measure himself or herself with respect to the ultimate goal, namely श्रेयस्-मोक्ष - Absolute freedom.

Indicating the लक्षणs of a ज्ञानी - a wise person, भगवान् says:

सर्वकर्माणि मनसा संन्यस्यास्ते सुखं वशी ।
नवद्वारे पुरे देही, नैव कुर्वन् न कारयन् ॥

5 - 13

A वशी is a ज्ञानी - a जितेन्द्रियः by natural evolution, one whose organs of perception and action are always naturally under total control. Describing such a वशी - ज्ञानी, भगवान् says:

सर्वकर्माणि मनसा संन्यस्य - Remaining totally dissociated from all actions - how?

मनसा - by mind, which means by maturity of his mind and बुद्धि, by his evolved wisdom in actions, recognizing परमेश्वर in all actions, and at the same time, recognizing every action as the very manifestation of परमेश्वर, as the very glory of परमेश्वर, that is the wisdom of a ज्ञानी. Through such wisdom, a ज्ञानी remains totally dissociated from all actions, even while being enthusiastically engaged in all actions just as a कर्मयोगी does. Being so dissociated, a वशी, a ज्ञानी

सुखं आस्ते - sits comfortably and cheerfully with no trace of tiresomeness or weariness on account of being engaged in actions of various kinds. Ordinarily, it is identification with the notion of doing the कर्म that makes a person weary or tiresome. Since a ज्ञानी has no such notion about कर्म, he sits comfortably and cheerfully, where?



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नवद्वारे पुरे देही - in his physical body, called the nine gated city. One's physical body is a city in itself, with all its activities, control mechanisms, etc. Thus one's physical body is called नवद्वार पुरी, the nine-gated city.

It is obvious that there should be someone there who is the Master in charge of various activities happening in this nine-gated city. Who is that some one? That someone is the चशी – the ज्ञानी. भगवान् says:

The ज्ञानी, remaining totally dissociated from all activities by wisdom, sits comfortably and cheerfully in the physical body.

What does that mean? It is obvious that whether one is a ज्ञानी or an अज्ञानी, wise or otherwise, one is only in one's physical body. When that is the case, what is the significance of the statement that the ज्ञानी sits in the physical body?

The significance is only that a ज्ञानी realizes that he is sitting in the physical body. If one is an अज्ञानी, not yet a wise person, he would probably think that he is sitting in a chair or on a carpet, etc. because he identifies himself with his physical body and his physical body is of course sitting in a chair or on a carpet, etc. On the other hand, a ज्ञानी does not identify himself with his physical body. He identifies himself with आत्मा – the परमेश्वर, which is in his physical body. If he identifies himself with the आत्मा – the परमेश्वर, then how can आत्मा be sitting in the physical body, because आत्मा is सर्वगतः – all pervading.

The answer is, even after one matures into a ज्ञानी, the person is still a जीव, even though the person is now a liberated जीव – a जीवन् मुक्त. The bodily existence and the bodily experiences continue for the जीव because of the प्रारब्ध कर्मफल शेष – because of what is left of one's प्रारब्ध कर्म फल – the maturing of the fruits of the past actions of the जीव.

Therefore, from the point of view of the जीव, आत्म ज्ञानं – self-knowledge took place in the जीव. Therefore the ज्ञानी is in the body of the जीव, and hence the आत्मा is in the body of the जीव. Therefore it is appropriate to say:



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वशी नवद्वारे पुरे देही सुखं आस्ते - The ज्ञानी as the आत्मा sits comfortably in the physical body. Now, how does he sit?

नैव कुर्वन् न कारयन् - Neither acting, nor causing anything to act

न एव कुर्वन्-स्वयं न कुर्वन् - Itself not performing any action. आत्मा itself does not perform any action. In its presence, and by its presence, activities take place. Further,

न एव कारयन् - आत्मा does not order any action to take place. Then how do actions take place in the physical body? As it was said, earlier,

इन्द्रियाणि इन्द्रियार्थेषु वर्तन्ते - every organ of perception and action does its allotted function naturally and spontaneously by their own mutual interactions, by the very presence, and in the very presence of आत्मा, which means by the Grace of परमेश्वर in oneself.

Thus the ज्ञानी, even though fully engaged in कर्म in daily life, stands totally dissociated from the notion of a कर्ता - the doer of any कर्म by virtue of his आत्मज्ञानं - Self Knowledge. He is ever cheerful and he is ever at peace in himself, because he has no weariness born of कर्म. He realizes that he is sitting in his physical body as a witness for the जीव to exhaust itself of all its प्रारब्ध कर्मफल शेष - whatever fruits of past actions still remaining for the physical body to experience. Though acting, the ज्ञानी, in fact, neither acts nor causes any action to take place. All his actions take place spontaneously and naturally through the mutual interactions of one's own गुणs, by the very presence and in the very presence of आत्मा, which means by the very Grace of परमेश्वर in himself. That is the लक्षण of a ज्ञानी .

Sri Krishna's description of a ज्ञानी continues, which we will see next time.