

that he longed neither for victory nor kingdom nor pleasures, by slaying his kinsmen. It means, that he was prepared to gain victory or kingdom, without slaying his kinsmen. Again, in the sixth verse of the second chapter, he said, "We don't know whether we shall conquer them, or they will conquer us, and we do not want to live by slaying them." It means, that if it was certain, that they would conquer the enemy and if they could get the kingdom without slaying them, they were prepared to gain it. Further, in the thirty-seventh verse of the second chapter, the Lord said to Arjuna, that he would be benefited in either case. If he was killed, he would go to heaven, and if he became victorious, he would enjoy the earth. Had Arjuna, no desire, in the least, to go to heaven and to enjoy the worldly pleasures, the Lord, perhaps, would not utter such words. It means, that Arjuna could not cultivate real dispassion, but he had a desire to attain salvation, which is also clear in this verse.



Link:—Now, the Lord answers Arjuna's question.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

सन्न्यासः कर्मयोगश्च निःश्रेयसकरावुभौ ।
तयोस्तु कर्मसन्न्यासात्कर्मयोगो विशिष्यते ॥ २ ॥

śrībhagavānurvāca

sannyāsaḥ karmayogaśca niḥśreyasakarāvubhau
tayostu karmasannyāsātkarmayogo viśiṣyate

The Blessed Lord said:

'Sannyāsa' (discipline of knowledge) and 'Karmayoga' (discipline of action) both lead to salvation. But of the two 'Karmayoga' is superior to 'Sāṅkhyayoga'. 2

Comment:—

[According to the principle of the Lord every person can

follow the Disciplines of Action and Knowledge, (Renunciation of Actions) of whatever caste, order of life and sect etc., he may be because His precept is not for the people of any particular caste, order of life or sect etc. In the first verse of this chapter Arjuna called the customary method of gaining knowledge by approaching enlightened soul having renounced actions as 'Karmasannyāsa' (Renunciation of Actions). But according to the Lord's precept a person can gain knowledge by following the Discipline of knowledge even without renouncing actions. Therefore, the Lord, supporting the customary principle of Arjuna, answers the question according to His own tenet.]

'Sannyāsa'—Here, this term, 'Sannyāsa' stands for 'Sāṅkhyayoga' (Discipline of Knowledge), rather than renunciation of actions. While answering Arjuna's question, the Lord discusses the path of 'Sāṅkhyayoga', in order to gain knowledge. Through that Sāṅkhyayoga, every man, while performing his duty, according to his caste, order of life and sect etc., in every circumstance, can gain knowledge, of the self i.e., attain salvation.

In the 'Sāṅkhyā' discipline, there is prominence given to discrimination. This discipline cannot be successful, without keen dispassion and discrimination. While following this discipline, a striver keeps his eye only on God, without accepting the independent existence of the world. So, the Lord declares, "The goal of the Unmanifested, is hard to reach by the embodied being" (Gītā 12/5). In the sixth verse of this chapter, also the Lord declares, that Sannyāsa is difficult to attain without Karmayoga, and Karmayoga is an easy means, to get detached from the world.

'Karmayoga'—Every human being, has been attached to the performance of actions, from time immemorial. In order to, do away with this attachment, performance of action, is indispensable (Gītā 6/3). Karmayoga, is the art of performing actions, in order to, get rid of this attachment. In Karmayoga, (Discipline of Action), every action, whether trivial or otherwise,

is not to be taken note of; but it has to be performed, for the welfare of others without any selfish motive, in order to get detached from it. So long as, actions are performed with a desire for their reward, one remains attached to these.

'Niḥśreyasakarāvubhau'—In response to Arjuna's question, which he put in the first verse, the Lord says, that both Sāṅkhyayoga and Karmayoga, lead to salvation, because the same equanimity is attained, through both of these. The same fact, has been clarified, in the fourth and the fifth verses of this chapter. It has also been pointed out by the Lord, in the twenty-fourth verse of the thirteenth chapter, when He declares, "Some attain knowledge, of the self by the path of knowledge, while others attain it by the path of action." Thus, both the paths of knowledge and action, are independent paths, to attain God (Gītā 3/3).

'Tayostu karmasannyāsāt'—Sāṅkhyayoga, is of two kinds—one has been described, in the thirty-fourth verse of the fourth chapter, in which there is physical renunciation of actions, while the other has been described, from the eleventh to the thirtieth verses of the second chapter, in which there is no renunciation of actions. Here the expression 'Karmasannyāsāt' stands, for the two kinds of Sāṅkhyayoga.

'Karmayogo viśiṣyate'—The Lord, in the third verse, explains that a Karmayogī should be regarded as a perpetual Sannyāsī, (with the spirit of renunciation), because he is easily released from worldly bondage. Again, in the sixth verse, He declares that renunciation is difficult to attain, without Karmayoga and a Karmayogī quickly attains to the Absolute. It means, that in Sāṅkhyayoga (Discipline of Knowledge), there is need of Karmayoga, while in Karmayoga, there is none for Sāṅkhyayoga. Thus, out of the two, which lead to salvation, the path of action, has been declared to be superior, by the Lord.

A Karmayogī, performs actions for the welfare of the world and also to set an example to the masses (Gītā 3/20), without any

selfish motive. This sort of action is called a sacrifice in Gītā. He, who performs actions for himself is bound (Gītā 3/9, 13). But a Karmayogī, who works only for the welfare of the world without any selfish motive, is liberated from the bondage of all actions (Gītā 4/23). Therefore, Karmayoga is better of the two.

The path of action, can be followed by all the people, of all castes, creeds and order of life etc., under all circumstances. But the Karmasannyāsa (renunciation), Arjuna talks about, can be followed, only under special circumstances (Gītā 4/34), because all the people cannot come across such great men, who have realized the truth. Moreover, they cannot have full faith, in those great souls and have an opportunity to live, in their company. Thus Karmayoga, is better of the two.

Karmayoga, consists in making proper use of available circumstances, even savage deeds of fighting. No one is incapable, and dependent on following this path of action, because in it, there is no desire to acquire anything. It is the desire, which makes a man incapable and dependent.

A sense of doership, and the desire to reap the fruit of actions, lead to bondage. A Sāṅkhyayogī and a Karmayogī both, have to renounce their affinity, for the world. A Sāṅkhyayogī, roots out a sense of doership through dispassion and discrimination, while a Karmayogī, discards it by performing actions, for the welfare of others, without any desire for the fruit of actions. Thus, the former is liberated by renouncing a sense of doership, while the latter is liberated, by renouncing desire to reap the fruit of action. If a striver, renounces the sense of doership, his desire for the fruit of action, is also renounced; and if he renounces the desire for the fruit of action, his sense of doership is renounced. A man, has a sense of doership, only when he has a desire, to acquire something or the other. When actions are performed without desire for fruit, these change, into inaction. Thus a Karmayogī is like an instrument, has no sense of doership.

A striver, tries to renounce his attachment to the worldly beings, objects and circumstances etc., because it leads him to bondage. In order to renounce it, he does not consider any being or object etc., as his own nor does he do and desire anything, for himself. All his actions are performed for the welfare of others, without any selfish motive. The desire for fruit of action causes a sense of doership and a sense of 'mine'. If he has no desire for the fruit of action, his sense of doership, comes to an end. It is not actions, but attachment to them and the desire for fruit, which lead to bondage. When one does not derive pleasure out of actions, nor does he desire fruit, how can a sense of doership remain? When he has no desire for the fruit of action, his sense of doership merges, in the aim (God) for which action is performed and then only God remains.

The 'egoism' of a Karmayogī, perishes quickly and easily, because he works for others. So his egoism is, also absorbed in rendering service to others. But the egoism of a Jñānayogī, (he who follows the path of knowledge) continues to exist, as he holds that he is a 'Mumukṣu' (seeker of salvation) and he works for his salvation. A Karmayogī, performs all activities for the good of others. Thus his ego subsides. On the other hand, a Jñānayogī practises discipline, for his well-being. His ego subsists, as he practises discipline, for himself.

A prominent feature of 'the Discipline of Knowledge', is the lack of independent existence of the world; while an important feature of 'the Discipline of Action', is lack of attachment. A striver, following the Discipline of Knowledge, through discrimination, wants to hold that there is no independent existence of the world but due to his attachment to the worldly objects, it is very difficult for him to hold this opinion, in his practical life. But a striver, following the Discipline of Action, gets rid of his attachment automatically, as his aim, is to render service to others, without any selfish motive. Moreover, it is easy for a Karmayogī, to

renounce objects, as these will be utilized by others; while it is difficult for a Jñānayogī to renounce them, by regarding these, as transitory and illusive, unless his dispassion, is very keen. Secondly, a Jñānayogī easily abandons objects of inferior quality, but these of superior quality which he considers useful for him, cannot be easily, abandoned. But a Karmayogī, may offer objects which are useful for him to others, easily, because he believes that these will be used by others. If there is, an extra slice of bread in a plate, we try to put away the one which is stale, spoiled and dry; but if we want to give a slice to anyone, we will give a good one, so that it may be used by him. So, the Discipline of Knowledge, is very difficult to practise, without renouncing attachment. It is because of attachment that a Jñānayogī, being entangled in worldly pleasures, may have a fall.

A man, cannot renounce attachment, merely by knowing the unreal, as unreal.* Though objects seen on a screen, in the cinema are unreal, yet a cinema-goer gets attached to the cinema and wastes his time, money, eyesight and character. It is attachment, rather than the object which bind a man. Thus, an object which may be either real or unreal, or it may transcend the two, but it binds a man if he is attached to it. So a striver, should try to root out this attachment.

Appendix—Though without ‘Yoga’ both ‘Karma’ and ‘Jñāna’ lead to bondage yet performance of actions does not lead to as much ruin as the bookish knowledge does. Mere bookish knowledge can lead to hells—

‘ajñasyārdhprabuddhasya sarvaṁ brahmeti yo vadet
mahāniraya jāleṣu sa tena viniyojitaḥ
(Yogavāsiṣṭha sthiti 39)

* A man can renounce the unreal by regarding it as unreal by being established in the self. This establishment in the self does not depend on instruments such as the mind and intellect etc., because they themselves are unreal. How can we get rid of the unreal while our affinity of the unreal subsists and we depend upon it for realising the Real?

‘He, who preaches the gospel ‘all is Brahma’ to an ignorant man, condemns that man to the snare of fightful hells.”

Therefore the man who perform actions is superior to the man possessing bookish knowledge. Then what can be said about the superiority of the person who follows the Discipline of Action! A Jñānayogī is useful only for himself but a Karmayogī is useful for the entire universe. He, who is useful for the universe, is also useful for himself—this is the rule. Therefore a Karmayogī is superior to a Jñānayogī.

The Discipline of Action can be practised without the Discipline of Knowledge but the Discipline of Knowledge is difficult to attain without the Discipline of Action (Gītā 5/6). Therefore Karmayoga is superior to Sāṅkhyayoga, Discipline of Devotion is superior to Discipline of Action. Therefore in the Gītā there is description first of Sāṅkhyayoga, then of Karmayoga and afterwards of Bhaktiyoga.* In this order the Yogas have been discussed.

Karmayoga and Jñānayoga—both bear the same fruit (Gītā 5/4-5). In their practices ‘Karmayoga’ and ‘Bhaktiyoga’ are one—‘maitraḥ karuṇa eva ca’ (Gītā 12/13); because Karmayoga and Bhaktiyoga—in both, feeling of providing happiness to others reigns. In the performance of actions ‘Karmī’ (One who perform actions) and ‘Karmayogī’ (who without attachment acts for the welfare of others) are one (Gītā 3/25) and in the performance of actions, an enlightened soul and God are similar (one) (Gītā 3/22—26). In this way a Karmayogī becomes one with a Karmī,

* The same order has been followed in the Bhāgavata—

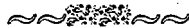
yogāstrayo mayā proktā nṛnām śreyovidhitasayā
jñānam karma ca bhaktiśca nopāyo’nyo’si kutracit

(Śrīmadbhā. 11/20/6)

“I have mentioned three yogas for the men who want to attain salvation—Jñānayoga, Karmayoga and Bhaktiyoga. Besides these three there is no-other way for salvation.”

a Jñānayogī, a Bhaktiyogī and God, all the four—this is the special characteristic of Karmayoga.

In 'Sāṅkhyayoga' a subtle trace of ego may persist but in 'Karmayoga' because of the total detachment from actions and objects, no subtle trace of ego subsists. In Karmayoga, 'Akarma' remains (Gītā 4/18) while in Sāṅkhyayoga the soul (self) remains (Gītā 6/29).



Link:—Now, the Lord in the next verse, explains why Karmayoga is better of the two.

ज्ञेयः स नित्यसन्न्यासी यो न द्वेष्टि न काङ्क्षति ।
निर्द्वन्द्वो हि महाबाहो सुखं बन्धात्प्रमुच्यते ॥ ३ ॥

jñeyah sa nityasannyāsī yo na dveṣṭi na kāṅkṣati
nirdvandvo hi mahābāho sukhaṁ bandhātpramucyate

He who neither hates nor desires anything should be known as a Nitya Sannyāsī (ever a renouncer); for, free from dualities (pairs of opposites) he is liberated easily from bondage, O mighty-armed (Arjuna). 3

Comment:—

'Mahābāho'—The term 'Mahābāho', stands for one who is mighty-armed i.e., brave, and also for one, whose brothers and friends, are great men. Arjuna's friend, was Lord Kṛṣṇa, the disinterested friend of all beings, and his brother was Yudhiṣṭhira, the most righteous person, who had no enemy. By addressing Arjuna as 'Mahābāho', the Lord means to say, that he possesses the might to follow the path of action easily.

'Yo na dveṣṭi'—A Karmayogī, does not hate any being, object, circumstance or principle etc., but he renders selfless service to everyone. If he has the least, hatred for anyone, he cannot follow, the Discipline of Action, scrupulously. He should give priority, in rendering service, to a person for whom he bears, even a little